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LIFE OF AARON BURR.

A. Burr

Theodosia

THE

LIFE AND TIMES

OF

AARON BURR,

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL IN THE ARMY OF THE REVOLUTION,
UNITED STATES SENATOR, VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE
UNITED STATES, ETC.

BY J. PARTON,

AUTHOR OF "HUMOROUS POETRY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE,"
"LIFE OF HORACE GREELEY," ETC.

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TO

The Memory

OF

THEODOSIA,

The Daughter.

"As to Burr, these things are admitted, and, indeed, can not be denied, that he is a man of extreme and irregular ambition; that he is selfish to a degree which excludes all social affections; and that he is decidedly profligate."

Alexander Hamilton.

"A great man in little things, while he (Burr) is really small in great ones."

Thomas Jefferson.

"I witness your extraordinary fortitude with new wonder at every new misfortune. Often, after reflecting on this subject, you appear to me so superior, so elevated above all other men; I contemplate you with such a strange mixture of humility, admiration, reverence, love and pride, that very little superstition would be necessary to make me worship you as a superior being; such enthusiasm does your character excite in me. When I afterward revert to myself, how insignificant do my best qualities appear. My vanity would be greater, if I had not been placed so near you; and yet my pride is our relationship. I had rather not live than not be the daughter of such a man."

Theodosia Burr Alston, to her Father, Aaron Burr

"Our friends and our enemies draw us — and, I often think, both pictures are like."

Thackeray.

PREFACE.

The story of Aaron Burr's strange, eventful life, which must possess interest for the American people always, I attempt to tell, because no one else has told it.

Few men have been more written about than he ; but, generally, by partisans, opponents, or enemies. The life of Burr, by the late Mr. M. L. Davis, as it contains a great number of Colonel Burr's letters, and many documents respecting him and his doings in the world, has a value of its own, which publications like the present can not diminish. But the story of the man's life is not to be extracted from those volumes, for the simple reason that it is not contained in them. One may read Mr. Davis's work, and Burr's European Diary, and the Report of his Trial for Treason, making in all more than three thousand octavo pages, and still be utterly unable to decide what manner of man he was, and what, in the great crises of his life, he either did or meant to do. I can confidently appeal to any one who has gone through those six ponderous volumes, to confirm the assertion, that they leave Aaron Burr, at last, to the consideration of the reader, a baffling enigma !

To have condensed the information contained in those

thousands of pages into a single volume of convenient size and price, would have been itself a justifiable work. Much more than that has been done. To complete my information, I have resorted to the following additional sources :

First, the Literature of the period, and, particularly, the Memoirs and Letters of public characters, who were the rivals and associates of Burr. The correspondence of Jefferson, Hamilton, and John Adams has, of course, been of the most essential service.

Secondly, the newspapers of Burr's day. Great numbers of these are preserved, among other priceless treasures, in the library of the New York Historical Society, for access to which I am indebted to Mr. Moore, the obliging librarian of that institution.

Thirdly, Aaron Burr himself.

I never saw Aaron Burr, though in my early childhood I have played marbles before his door, and looked with curiosity upon the old-fashioned dull brass-knocker that bore his name ; having vaguely heard that some terrible old man, whom nobody would speak to, lived there all alone. The information that I have derived from Burr himself comes to me through his surviving friends and connections

So superior is spoken to written language, that a few hours' close conversation with people who were really intimate with Colonel Burr, threw just the needed light upon his character and conduct, which ransacked libraries had failed to shed. But for such conversations, I should never have understood the man nor his career. During the

last three years, I have been in the habit of conversing familiarly with many of those who associated with him during the last twenty or thirty years of his life, receiving at every interview some addition to my stock of anecdote and reminiscence. Burr had a remarkable memory, and, with persons whom he liked and trusted, was fond of conversing upon the events of his career; the whole story of which, at one time and another, he told them many times over. With all his faults, he was never given to self-vindication. He was one of those men who naturally make themselves out to be worse than they are, rather than better. He told the anecdotes of his life merely as anecdotes. The impression which they made upon those who heard them was such, that many of his stories they still relate in the very words he used, and with imitations of the look and gesture that accompanied each phrase. Burr's own view of the leading transactions of his life has thus been imparted to me.

Neither of my informants knew what any other of them had told me, or would tell me. The general concurrence, as well of the facts they gave, as of the opinions they entertained of the man, and their feelings toward him, was remarkable. The discordance and contradictions begin only when the inner circle of those who *know* is left, and the outer one of those who have *heard*, is entered. To Burr's surviving friends, then, I chiefly owe it that I have been able to extricate his story from the falsehoods in which it was embedded.

Others, whose acquaintance with him was slight and

accidental, and some who merely saw him in public situations, have also given me interesting information. The patient courtesy of many distinguished gentlemen to a stranger who could never make the slightest return of their kindness, greatly enhanced the obligation which they conferred.

Such are the sources from which the following narrative has been derived. All of them have been used — none followed.

It may occur to some readers, that the good in Burr is too conspicuously displayed, or his faults too lightly touched, in this volume. To such I desire to say that, in my opinion, it is the *good* in a man who goes astray, that ought most to alarm and warn his fellow-men. To suppress the good qualities and deeds of a Burr is only less immoral than to suppress the faults of a Washington. In either case, the practical use of the Example is lost. Who can hope to imitate a perfect character ? Who fears that he shall ever resemble an unredeemed villain ?

Besides, Aaron Burr has had hard measure at the hands of his countrymen. By men far beneath him, even in moral respects, he has been most cruelly and basely belied. Let the truth of his marvelous history be told at last. If, here and there, my natural and just indignation at the unworthy treatment to which his name has been subjected, has biased me slightly in his favor, the error, I trust, will not be thought unpardonable. Aaron Burr was no angel ; he was no devil ; he was a man, and a — filibuster.

The period during which Burr was a public man is the

most interesting in the history of the United States, after the Revolution. It was then that Old Things in this country really passed away. Then arose the conquering Democratic Party. Then America became America. We are still only reaping what was sown in those twelve years, and shall for a very long time to come. Nothing considerable has occurred in American politics since the election of Jefferson and Burr in 1800 — though one or two considerable things have been gallantly attempted.

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THE FATHER OF AARON BURR'S MOTHER.

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In the autumn of 1722, when New York was a town of eight thousand inhabitants, and possessed some of the characteristics of a Dutch city, an English sea-port, a new settlement, a garrisoned town, and a vice-royal residence, there used to walk about its narrow, winding streets, among the crowd of Dutch traders, English merchants, Indians, officers and soldiers, a young man whose appearance was in marked contrast with that of the passers-by. His tall, slender, slightly stooping figure, was clad in homespun parson's gray. His face, very pale, and somewhat wasted, wore an aspect of singular refinement, and though but nineteen years of age, there was in his air and manner the dignity of the mature and cultivated man.

This was Jonathan Edwards, who had just come from studying divinity at Yale College, to preach to a small congregation of Presbyterians in the city. New York had an ill name at that time among the good people of New England. "The Dutch of New York and New Jersey," said one of them, "are little better than the savages of our American deserts." Jonathan Edwards was sent by a company of clergymen to this desperate place much in the spirit of those who, at the present day, send missionaries to Oregon or to the mining districts of California.

Every thing was adverse to the spread of his faith at that time in New York, and the young clergyman, after a residence of only a few months, went home to resume his studies. Dearly

loved and highly prized by some members of his little congregation in New York he certainly was; but there is no reason to suppose that the preaching of the greatest of American clergymen attracted the slightest attention from the unintellectual citizens of the place. Yet a happier, a more exultant youth, never trod the shores of this island than Jonathan Edwards. He had grasped the tenets of his sect not with the languid assent with which an inherited creed is frequently received, but with that eager, enthusiastic love which accompanies original conceptions. To him they were the most real of all realities. His manner was very calm and gentle. He spoke little, and kept apart from the busy life of the city. But the light of perfect benevolence and rapt-devotion rested upon his noble, thought-laden countenance, and a profound enthusiasm animated his heart.

Of his life in New York, he writes in after years a brief account, which still exists to reveal to a canting age a soul *devoted* to the object of its love. How touching is this extract:—"If I heard the least hint of any thing that happened in any part of the world that appeared, in some respect or other, to have a favorable aspect on the interests of Christ's kingdom, my soul eagerly catched at it; and it would much animate and refresh me. *I used to be eager to read public news-letters, mainly for that end; to see if I could not find some news, favorable to the interest of religion in the world.* I very frequently used to retire into a solitary place, on the banks of Hudson's river, at some distance from the city, for contemplation on divine things and secret converse with God; and had many sweet hours there. Sometimes Mr. Smith and I walked there together, to converse on the things of God: and our conversation used to turn much on the advancement of Christ's kingdom in the world, and the glorious things that God would accomplish for his church in the latter days. I had then, and at other times, the greatest delight in the holy Scriptures, of any book whatsoever. Oftentimes in reading it, every word seemed to touch my heart. I felt a harmony between something in my heart and those sweet and powerful words. I seemed often to see so much light exhibited by

every sentence, and such a refreshing food communicated, that I could not get along in reading; often dwelling long on one sentence, to see the wonders contained in it; and yet almost every sentence seemed to be full of wonders."

Through the obsolete phraseology of this passage, one easily discerns a fine disinterestedness of character which, unless the human race should become wholly debased, can never become obsolete.

The industry of one of his descendants has given the world a biography of Jonathan Edwards, which possesses historical interest.* Of the religion called "evangelical," he was perhaps, the most perfect exemplification that ever existed. The child was father of the man. We see him, as a boy of ten, building a booth in a swamp near his father's house, to which he and two of his companions used to go regularly to pray. In his eleventh year, we read of his demonstrating, with a kind of solemn jocularity, the absurdity of an opinion which had been advanced by a boy of his own age, that the soul was material, and remained in the grave with the body till the resurrection. At twelve, we find him beginning a letter to one of his sisters thus: "Through the wonderful goodness and mercy of God, there has been in this place a very remarkable outpouring of the Spirit of God." He proceeds to inform his sister that he "has *reason to think* it is in some measure diminished, but he hopes not much, and that above thirty persons came commonly a Mondays to converse with father about their souls." At the same time, he exhibited in things not religious, an intelligence truly remarkable. He wrote, in his twelfth year, an elaborate description of "the wondrous way of the working of the forest spider," which shows that he possessed a rare talent for the observation of nature. One of the greatest of natural philosophers was lost to the world when Jonathan Edwards became a theologian.

At thirteen, he was one of the thirty-one students who, in 1716, composed Yale College, and there occurred the events which decided his career. "Toward the latter part of my

* The Life of President Edwards.—S. E. Dwight. New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1830.

time at college," he wrote, "it pleased God to seize me with a pleurisy, in which he brought me nigh to the grave, and shook me over the pit of hell." Alarmed, the exemplary youth "made seeking his salvation the main business of his life"—with the usual evangelical result. The other event was, for his country and the Protestant world, far more important. It was his reception of what theologians call the doctrine of election.

From his childhood up, as he himself records, his ingenuous mind had revolted from the idea of "God's choosing whom he would to eternal life, and rejecting whom he pleased, leaving them eternally to perish and be everlastingly tormented in hell." But the time came when he thought he believed this doctrine. He could not tell how nor why. On a sudden, conviction flashed upon his mind, and what had once seemed a horrible doctrine, he contemplated with delight. Henceforth, the leisure of his life, and the best efforts of his intellect, were devoted to its elucidation. His treatise on the "Freedom of the Will," by which he is chiefly known to the recent world, is an ingenious attempt to make that reasonable, which, not through his reason, he had himself received. To reconcile the orthodox tenets with the facts of nature and the reason of man is the task at which the brain of New England grew large and the chest narrow. Of those who have lived and died in that vocation, the greatest and the best was Jonathan Edwards.

Nobler than any of his works was the life of this good man. He was one of those who have deliberately incurred obloquy and ruin for conscience' sake.

After leaving New York, he was a tutor in Yale College for a year or two, and was then chosen pastor of the church at Northampton. There, his preaching produced effects that have never been surpassed. His church became the largest Protestant society in the world. He stood at the head of the clerical profession in New England. The "great awakening," of which so much appears in the writings of that day, began in his church at Northampton, and extended to the remotest colony in America, to England, and to Scotland. He was the

first American author who achieved a European reputation; while he was yet a young man, sermons and volumes of his were republished in Great Britain and widely circulated. At home, wherever he preached, crowds hung upon the lips of the great Mr. Edwards of Northampton.

For twenty-three years he held this unequaled position, a shining light in the Protestant world, and dear to the pride of his own congregation. Then there arose a dispute between pastor and flock, whether saints and sinners were equally entitled to partake of the sacrament, or saints only. The pastor was for excluding, the flock for admitting, sinners. The people appealed to the established custom of the parish; the pastor, to the spirit and letter of the authoritative writings. The people grew warm, refused their minister a hearing on the point in dispute, and clamored for his dismissal. He was dismissed. Himself, his wife, his ten children, were suddenly deprived of the means of living, and in circumstances that made it unlikely that he would be again able to practice his profession.

That a company of Christian people, after having had for nearly a quarter of a century the best instructions in the principles of their faith that any congregation ever had, and that instruction enforced by a perfect example, should have been able thus to reward their religious teacher, is a fact, which those who are curious in moral causes and effects will always deem worthy of consideration.

On this trying occasion, Jonathan Edwards honored human nature by the quiet dignity and grand forbearance of his conduct. He accepted soon the humble post of missionary to the Indians of Stockbridge, and labored there, this ablest of living preachers and theologians, with no less zeal and devotion than he had shown in his prime of popularity. There, in the space of four months and a half, he wrote his treatise on the Will, which is the *Principia* of Calvinistic theology. He wrote it when he was so embarrassed that he procured with difficulty the necessary paper, and parts of the work, like Pope's Homer, were written on the backs of letters and the blank pages of pamphlets. His wife, a lady magnificently en-

dowed in person and mind, his daughters, beautiful and full of talent, made lace and painted fans, which were sent to Boston for sale.

Esther, the third of these lovely, industrious daughters, was already eighteen years of age when the family removed to Stockbridge. Two years after, came to her home, on the edge of the wilderness, one of the most renowned and brilliant members of her father's profession. He stood over her, or sat near her, one may fancy, as she wove her lace or painted her fan-paper. He had an eye for a lady's hand, this clergyman. He was not one of those grim-looking persons whose portraits form the hideous frontispieces to the religious books of that period, but a gentleman whose style and manner would have graced a court. He staid only three days at Stockbridge, but after his departure the young maiden made no more lace and painted no more fans for the Boston ladies. Such, at least, was the gossip of the time, as one reads in letters which chance has preserved for the perusal of a prying biographer.

The Edwards stock is famous in New England. The remotest known ancestor of the race was a London clergyman in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Three generations of worthy, substantial persons, his descendants, lived in Connecticut. From Jonathan Edwards a surprising number of distinguished individuals have descended; men of worth, talent, and station; women, beautiful, accomplished, and gifted. Histories of the United States have been written in which his name does not occur; but upon every person reared since his day in New England he has made a discernible impression, and he influences, to this hour, millions who never heard his name. The thing he chiefly did in his life was this: the church and the world, two hostile bodies, were beginning, as it were, to relent toward one another, to approach, to mingle. Jonathan Edwards, with his subtle, feminine intellect and resolute will, threw himself between the two bodies, kept them apart, made more distinct than ever the line of demarcation, and rendered compromise between the two, perhaps, for ever impossible.

Such a man was the father of Aaron Burr's mother.

CHAPTER II.

THE REVEREND AARON BURR,

FATHER OF AARON BURR.

Outline of his early History—Pastor of Newark Church—A Great Schoolmaster—President of Princeton College—The First Commencement—Sudden Marriage of the President—His Writings—His Portrait.

The Reverend Aaron Burr was a conspicuous and important person in his day.

He came of a Puritan family which may have originated in Germany, where the name is still common, but which had flourished in New England for three generations, and had given to those provinces clergymen, lawyers, and civilians of some eminence. He was born at Fairfield, in Connecticut, in 1716, and graduated at Yale, with great distinction, in his nineteenth year. His proficiency in Latin and Greek enabled him to win one of the three Berkley scholarships, which entitled the possessor to a maintenance at college for two years after graduating. While he was pursuing his studies upon that endowment, he was arrested, as college students frequently were in those days, by a 'revival of religion.' He became a convert and a student of theology. "His human literature," to use the figure of one of his eulogists, "was thenceforward an obsequious handmaid, ever ready to set off and embellish his mistress, Divinity."

An account of his conversion, in his own words, has been preserved. It is remarkable, among other narratives of the kind, for its concise exactness of expression. "This year," he says, "God saw fit to open my eyes and show me what a miserable creature I was. Till then I had spent my life in a dream, and as to the great design of my being, had lived in vain. Though before, I had been under frequent convictions, and was driven

to a form of religion, yet I knew nothing as I ought to know. But then I was brought to the footstool of sovereign grace, saw myself polluted by nature and practice, had affecting views of the divine wrath I deserved, was made to despair of help in myself, and almost concluded that my day of grace was past. It pleased God at length to reveal his Son to me in the gospel as an all-sufficient Saviour, and I hope inclined me to receive him on the terms of the gospel." Here is the whole body of Calvinistic divinity in a paragraph.

At the early age of twenty-two he was the settled and popular pastor of the Presbyterian church in Newark, New Jersey. Great 'revivals' followed his preaching. The placid but commanding eloquence of which he was, thus early in his career, a finished master, was, by many, more admired than the torrent-like vehemence of Whitefield, or the subtle argumentation of Edwards. We have a description of his mode of preaching from the pen of Governor Livingston of New Jersey, his friend in life, his eloquent eulogist after his death. "He was none of those downy doctors," said the governor, "who soothe their hearers into delusive hope of divine acceptance, or substitute external morality in the room of vital godliness. On the contrary, he scorned to proclaim the peace of God till the rebel laid down his arms, and returned to his allegiance. He was an embassador that adhered faithfully to his instructions, and never acceded to a treaty that would not be ratified in the court of heaven. He searched the conscience with the terrors of the law before he assuaged its anguish with the balm of Gilead, or presented the sweet emollients of a bleeding deity. He acted, in short, like one, not intrusted with the lives and fortunes, but the everlasting interests of hi fellow mortals."

It was customary at that time for clergymen to receive pu pils for instruction in the classical languages. Mr. Burr's reputation for eloquence and learning brought him so many boys that his private class grew rapidly into an important school. He kept ushers. He wrote a Latin grammar for the use of his pupils, which, under the name of the "Newark Grammar," was long the standard at Princeton. His success in teaching

was memorable. He possessed not only a happy method of giving instruction, but he had the rarer and higher art of infusing into his pupils his own enthusiastic love of learning and literature. He was an admirable teacher, jocund and winning, without losing or lessening his dignity or his authority.

To his labors as pastor, schoolmaster, and author, were afterward added those of the President of the College of New Jersey, an infant institution which his toil and tact fostered to a healthy and vigorous growth. An article in an old newspaper,* published when George the Second was king, enables us to see this excellent, indefatigable man on that triumphant day of his life when the college conferred its first degree, in the presence of the governor of the province, and a great concourse of people. With amusing particularity the writer narrates the august ceremonies of the day:

"His excellency (the governor) was preceded from his lodgings at the president's house, first, by the candidates walking in couples, uncovered; next followed the trustees, two and two, being covered; and, last of all, his excellency, the governor, with the president at his left hand. At the door of the place appointed for the public acts, the procession (amid a great number of spectators there gathered) was inverted, the candidates parting to the right and left hand, and the trustees in like manner. His excellency first entered with the president, the trustees went following in the order in which they were ranged in the charter, and, last of all, the candidates.

"Upon the bell ceasing, and the assembly being composed, the president began the public acts by solemn prayer to God, in the English tongue, for a blessing upon the public transactions of the day; upon his majesty, King George the Second, and the royal family; upon the British nation and dominions; upon the governor and government of New Jersey; upon all seminaries of true religion and good literature, and particularly upon the infant College of New Jersey. Which being concluded, the president, attended in the pulpit by the Rev. Thomas Arthur, who had been constituted clerk of the cor-

* Pennsylvania Journal, December 8th, 1748.

poration, desired, in the English tongue, the assembly to stand up and hearken to his majesty's royal charter, granted to the trustees of the College of New Jersey. Upon which, the assembly standing, the charter was distinctly read by the Rev. Mr. Arthur, with the usual endorsement by his majesty's attorney-general, and the certificate, signed by the secretary of the province, of its having been approved in council with his excellency. After this, the morning being spent, the president signified to the assembly that the succeeding acts would be deferred till two in the afternoon. Then the procession, in returning to the president's house, was made in the order before observed.

"The like procession was made in the afternoon as in the morning, and the assembly being seated in their places and composed, the president opened the public acts, first, by an elegant oration in the Latin tongue, delivered *memoriter*, modestly declaring his unworthiness and unfitness for so weighty a trust as had been reposed in him; apologizing for the defects that would unavoidably appear in his part of the present service; displaying the manifold advantages of the liberal arts and sciences in exalting and dignifying the human nature, enlarging the soul, improving the faculties, civilizing mankind, qualifying them for the important offices of life, and rendering men useful members of church and state. That to learning and the arts was chiefly owing the vast preëminence of the polished nations of Europe to the almost brutish savages in America, the sight of which last was the constant object of horror and commiseration.

"Then the president proceeded to mention the honor paid by our ancestors in Great Britain to the liberal sciences, by erecting and endowing those illustrious seminaries of learning which for many ages had been the honor and ornament of those happy isles, and the source of infinite advantages to the people there, observing that the same noble spirit had animated their descendants, the first planters of America, who, as soon as they were formed into a State, in the very infancy of time, had wisely laid religion and learning at the foundation of their commonwealth, and had always regarded them

as the firmest pillars of their church and State. That hence, very early, arose Harvard College, in New Cambridge, and afterward, Yale College, in New Haven, which have had a growing reputation for many years, and have sent forth many hundreds of learned men of various stations and characters in life, that in different periods have proved the honor and ornament of their country, and of which the one or the other had been the *alma mater* of most of the literati then present.

"That learning, like the sun in its western progress, had now begun to dawn upon the province of New Jersey, through the happy influence of its generous patron, their most excellent governor.

"These, and many other particulars, having, *more oratoria*, taken up three quarters of an hour, and the *Thesis* being dispersed among the learned in the assembly, the candidates, by command of the president, entered upon the public disputation, in Latin, in which six questions in philosophy and theology were debated, one of which was, whether the liberty of acting according to the dictates of conscience in matters merely religious, ought to be restrained by any human power? And it was justly held and concluded that liberty ought not to be restrained.

"Then the president, addressing himself to the trustees, in Latin, asked whether it was their pleasure that these young men who had performed the public exercises in disputation should be admitted to the degree of Bachelor of the Arts? Which being granted by his excellency in the name of all the trustees present, the president descended from the pulpit, and, being seated with his head covered, received them two by two, and, according to the authority to him committed by the royal charter, after the manner of the academies in England, admitted his young scholars to the degree of Bachelor of the Arts.

"In the next place, his excellency, Jonathan Belcher, Esq., governor and commander-in-chief of the province of New Jersey, having declared his desire to accept from that college the degree of Master of Arts, the other trustees, in a just sense of the honor done the college by his excellency's condo-

scension, most heartily having granted his request, the president, rising uncovered, addressed himself to his excellency, and according to the same authority committed to him by the royal charter, after the manner of the academies of England, admitted him to the degree of Master of Arts.

"Then the president ascended the pulpit, and commanded the orator *salutatorius* to ascend the rostrum, who, being Mr. Samuel Thane, just before graduated Bachelor of the Arts, he in a modest and decent manner, first apologizing for his insufficiency, and then having spoken of the excellency of the liberal arts and sciences and of the numberless benefits they yielded to mankind in private and social life, addressed himself in becoming salutations and thanks to his excellency and the trustees, the president, and the whole assembly, all which being performed in good Latin, from his memory, in a handsome oratorical manner, in the space of about half an hour, the president concluded in English, with thanksgiving to heaven and prayer to God for a blessing on the scholars that had received the public honors of the day, and for the smiles of Heaven upon the infant College of New Jersey, and dismissed the assembly.

"All which being performed to the great satisfaction of all present, his excellency, with the trustees and scholars, returned to the house of the president in the order observed in the morning, where, after sundry by-laws were made, chiefly for regulating the studies and manners of the students, they agreed upon a corporation seal."

The president was only thirty-two years of age when these scenes transpired. He was a man small of stature, very handsome, with clear, dark eyes of a soft luster, quite unlike the piercing orbs of his son; a figure compactly formed, but somewhat slender, and with the bearing of a prince. The fascinating manner and lofty *style* of Mr. President Burr are frequently mentioned in the letters of the period. On this great occasion we can well believe that there was an impressive charm in his movements and delivery.

For eight years after his election to the presidency, he retained his church and his school, and traveled far and wide

in collecting funds for the college, and promoting lotteries for its benefit. And such were his talents for the dispatch of business that, while both the school and the church continued to prosper, the college increased in ten years from eight students to ninety; and from being an institution without house, land, endowment, or reputation, to one having all these in sufficiency.

A file of letters from one of Mr. Burr's pupils to his father, preserved by a happy chance among the papers of an old Philadelphia family, afford us, at this distance of time, an insight into the very class-room of the president. The beloved, the zealous, the enlightened teacher is exhibited in these letters. A single fact revealed in them is enough to prove him a superior and a catholic mind. And that fact is, that though the president was, perhaps, the first classical scholar in the provinces, he was also warmly interested in natural science, and eager to interest the students in it. He taught them himself how to calculate eclipses. On one occasion, when, after a long negotiation, he had induced a lecturer by the offer of forty pounds, to come from Philadelphia and exibit his philosophical apparatus, all other studies were laid aside for some weeks before the philosopher's arrival, in order that the students might derive the greatest possible advantage from witnessing the experiments. The lecturer, it appears, excited so much interest in "the newly-discovered fluid called electricity," that some of the students set about making small electrical machines.

In the midst of all this cheerful and wise activity occurred an event in Mr. Burr's history which gave the gossips of the province employment enough. Until his thirty-seventh year the president shamed the ladies of New Jersey by living a bachelor. In the summer of 1752, to the surprise of every one, and in a manner the most extraordinary, he wooed and wedded the lovely and vivacious Esther Edwards. Some hints of the oddity of this affair, which appeared in the New York *Gazette* for the 20th of July, 1752, the letters of the young gentleman just referred to enable us to explain. The writer in the *Gazette*, after mentioning the marriage, with due

praise of the wedded pair, remarked that he supposed there had not been for some centuries a courtship more in the patriarchal mode, and jocosely advised young gentlemen to follow the president's example, and endeavor to restore courtship and marriage to their original simplicity and design.

The young letter-writer's version of the story is the following: "In the latter end of May the president took a journey into New England, and during his absence he made a visit of but three days to the Rev. Mr. Edwards's daughter at Stockbridge; in which short time, though he had no acquaintance with, nor had ever seen, the lady these six years, I suppose he accomplished his whole design; for it was not above a fortnight after his return here, before he sent a young fellow (who came out of college last fall) into New England to conduct her and her mother down here. They came to town on Saturday evening, the 27th ult., and on the Monday evening following the nuptial ceremonies were celebrated between Mr. Burr and the young lady. As I have yet no manner of acquaintance with her, I can not describe to you her qualifications and properties. However, they say she is a very valuable lady. I think her a person of great beauty; though I must say she is rather too young (being twenty-one years of age) for the president. This account you will doubtless communicate to mammy, as I know she has Mr. Burr's happiness much at heart."

Two weeks later he writes to his "dear mammy" on the engrossing subject: "I can't omit acquainting you that our president enjoys all the happiness the married state can afford. I am sure when he was in the condition of celibacy the pleasure of his life bore no comparison to that he now possesses. From the little acquaintance I have with his lady, I think her a woman of very good sense, of a genteel and virtuous education, amiable in her person, of great affability and agreeableness in conversation, and a very excellent economist. These qualifications may help you to form some idea of the person who lives in the sincerest mutual affections with Mr. Burr."

The marriage was speedily, but not rashly, concluded. The

president, it is probable, had not *seen* the young lady since she was fifteen; but at that age her father thought her woman enough to be a member of his church, and it was a characteristic of that cultivated and spiritualized family to come early to maturity.

Besides, the name of President Burr was a household word in the family of Jonathan Edwards. The two men, long associated in schemes for Christianizing the Indians, were also formed by nature to be friends, because each could see in the other admirable qualities wanting in himself. Edwards was reflective and studious, without tact or knowledge of the world, full of matter, but not skillful in wielding it. He lamented his awkward address and unimposing presence. "I have a constitution," he says in a well-known passage, "in many respects peculiarly unhappy, attended with flaccid solids, vapid, sizy, and scarce fluids, and a low tide of spirits; often occasioning a kind of childish weakness and contemptibleness of speech, presence, and demeanor, and a disagreeable dullness and stiffness, much unfitting me for conversation." Here we see the Student, who bent over his books fourteen hours a day, who took his meat and his drink by weight and measure, and whose utter sincerity rendered him powerless to subdue or to manage a fractious congregation. Admirable to such a man must have seemed the alert and brilliant Burr, so thoroughly alive, with every faculty at instant command, of dauntless self-possession, with a presence and address that invited confidence and disarmed impertinence. Burr, on his part, had modesty and good sense enough to know that, with all his shining qualities, he was no more the superior of Jonathan Edwards, than an armory is superior to the mine of ore from which the polished weapons of a thousand armories can be made. There was no need of a long courtship, then, for Esther Edwards to learn that Mr. President Burr was a man to make happy the woman he loved.

Besides the "Latin Grammar," Mr. Burr published a controversial "Letter" on the "Supreme Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ," which was reprinted in Boston thirty years after the author's death. An occasional sermon of his was also pub-

lished in his life-time. Two Latin orations by him have been preserved in manuscript, and many letters in English. One of these letters may close this chapter.

The letters of the religious people of those good old days give little insight into the individuality of the writers; human nature being under a theologic ban, and allowed to exhibit itself as little as possible. But the following letter* is an interesting relic, as it is characteristic of the age, if not of the man. It was written to a Mr. Hogg, a merchant in Scotland, where, by order of the kirk, a collection for the College of New Jersey was made in every parish. After acknowledging the unexpected magnitude of the Scottish contribution, the pious president proceeds:

"We have begun a building at Princeton, which contains a hall, library, and rooms to accommodate about an hundred students, though it will not any more of it be finished than is absolutely necessary at present—with an house for the president.

"We do every thing in the plainest and cheapest manner as far as is consistent with decency and convenience, having no superfluous ornaments. There was a necessity of our having an house sufficient to contain y^e^ students, as they could not lodge in private houses in that village where we have fixed the college; which, as it is the centre of the province, where provisions are plenty and firewood will always be cheap, is doubtless the fittest place we cou'd have pitch'd upon. The buildings prove more expensive than we at first imagin'd, from the best computations we could get; but by the smiles of heaven upon us we shall be able I think to compleat what we design at present; and have at least a fund left of £1,600 (sterling), which with the other income of the college, will be sufficient for the present officers and a little more, as money here will readily let for 7 per cent. interest with undoubted security. This fund will be encreased by what we get from Ireland, and a little more we expect from South Britain [*i. e.* England]; and we hope by the help of some generous benefactors here

* This letter was published, a year or two since, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, of London, merely as a curiosity accidentally preserved.

and abroad to be able before long to support a Professor of Divinity. That office at present lies on the president, with a considerable part of the instruction in other branches of literature. The trustees have their eyes upon Mr. Edwards, and want nothing but ability to give him an immediate call to that office.

"The students in general behave well; some among them that give good evidences of real piety, and a prospect of special usefulness in the churches of Christ, are a great comfort and support to me under the burden of my important station.

"I may in my next give you a more particular account of the college. It is at present under flourishing circumstances in many respects; has grown in favor with men, [and] I would humbly hope [with] God also. 'Tis my daily concern that it may answer the important ends of its institution, and that the expectations of our pious friends at home and abroad may not be disappointed.

"I shall not fail to acknowledge my Lord Lothian's generosity. I am sorry Messrs. Tennant and Davies neglected seasonably to acquaint their friends in Scotland of their safe arrival, etc. I hope their long and tedious passage, and the confusion their affairs were probably in by their long absence, may be something of an excuse. I can testify that they retain a very lively sense of the most generous treatment y^t^ they and the college met with in those parts.

"The defeat of General Braddock was an awful but a seasonable rebuke of Heaven. Those that had the least degree of seriousness left could not but observe with concern the strange confidence in an arm of flesh and disregard to God and religion that appear'd in that army. Preparations were made for rejoicing at the victory, as tho' it had been ensured, and a day appointed for the obtaining it. The whole country were alarm'd and struck with astonishment at the news of his defeat, and some awaken'd to eye the high hand of God in it, who had tho't litle of it before; and I can't but think God has brought good to the land out of this evil.*

* A letter of Edwards, of nearly the same date, likewise contains some comments on these transactions. He says, "I had opportunity to see and con-

"On the contrary, God was acknowledged in the army that went from Crown Point, vice and debauchery suppressed in a manner that has scarce been seen in this land, and was much admired at by those that saw it. This was much owing to Major-General Lyman, with whom I am well acquainted. He is a man of piety, and for courage and conduct, a spirit of government and good sense he has not his superior in these parts. He acquitted himself with uncommon bravery and good conduct in the engagement at Lake George, Sept. 8th, and it was owing to him, under God, y^{t} the victory was obtain'd, which prov'd a means of saving y^{e} country from ruin, as has since more fully appear'd by the scheme y^{e} French general had laid. I gave [have given] this hint about Mr. Lyman because Mr. Edward Cole, one of y^{e} officers, being offended y^{t} he banished some lewd women from the camp y^{t} he had brought with him, wrote a letter to scandalize him, hinting that he was a coward, tho' numbers that were in the

verse with ministers belonging to almost all parts of North America; and, among others, Mr. Davies of Virginia. He told me that he verily thought that General Braddock's defeat, the last summer, was a merciful dispensation of Divine Providence to those southern colonies. He said that notorious wickedness prevailed to that degree in that army, among officers and soldiers, and that they went forth openly in so self-confident and vain-glorious a manner, that if they had succeeded the consequence would have been a hardening of people in those parts, in a great degree, in a profane and atheistical temper, or to that purpose; and that many appeared very much solemnized by the defeat of that army, and the death of the general, and so many of the other chief officers; and some truly awakened. And by what I could learn it had something of the same effect among the people in New York and New Jersey. And the contrary success of the New England forces near Lake George, when violently attacked by Baron Dieskau and the regulars from France with him, who had been the chief French officer on the Ohio in the time of the engagement with General Braddock, one of which officers was killed by our forces and the other taken—I say the contrary success of the New England forces seemed to confirm the aforesaid effect; it being known by all how widely this army differed from the other, in the care that was taken to restrain vice and maintain religion in it; particularly by Major-General Lyman, the second officer in the army, a truly worthy man; a man of distinguished abilities and virtue, as well as uncommon martial endowments, who above any other officer was active in the time of the engagement."—*Letter to Dr. Gillies*, December 12th, 1755.

engagement have fully establish'd his character as one of the bravest officers, who expos'd himself in the hottest fire of the enemy, animating his men. And General Johnson himself acknowledges y^e^ honor of the day was due to Mr. Lyman.

"The state of these American Colonies at present looks dark. We are divided in our councils. Some are of such a spirit that they will forward nothing but what they are at the head of themselves. Several of the governors of the continent are now met at New York, to concert measures for the safety of [the] country. Much will depend on the result of this meeting. When I consider y^e^ crying iniquities of the day I cannot but tremble for fear of God's judgments that seem to hang over this sinning land.

"I have lately had a letter from Stockbridge, Mr. Edwards and his family are in usual health, except his daughter Betty, who is never well, and I believe not long for this world. Their situation is yet distressing, thro' fear of the enemy. My wife joins me in respectful and affectionate salutations to you and your son. I add but my poor prayers and ardent wishes y^t^ your declining days may be fill'd with comfort and usefulness, y^t^ you may have a late and an abundant entrance into y^e^ everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen."

This was the quality, these were the deeds of the father of Aaron Burr.

The college at Princeton is his monument; its very walls testify to his thoroughness and integrity. The interior of the main building has twice been destroyed by fire, but the builders who are restoring the edifice declare that no walls which they could now erect would equal in strength those which were constructed under the superintendence of President Burr. The house which he built for his own residence has been occupied by the presidents of the college ever since. Its solid structure, and spacious, lofty apartments, seem still to testify to the liberal mind and hand of him who planned it.

The portrait of President Burr, which is preserved in the college library, is a careful copy of an original that was lost and injured during the Revolution, but afterward discovered

and restored. Fineness of fiber, refinement, and utter purity of mind, energy, serenity, and seraphic benevolence, are equally expressed in this picture. Near to it leans upon the wall Peale's vast portrait of Washington, the most physical of all the portraits of Washington that were taken from life. The contrast is striking. That one of these men should be universally accepted, without questioning, as our greatest and best, while the other is scarcely known, compels the spectator to doubt the correctness of one or the other of these portraits.

CHAPTER III.

AARON BURR BORN, AND LEFT AN ORPHAN.

REMOVAL TO PRINCETON — LAST LABORS AND DEATH OF PRESIDENT BURR — CHARACTER AND DEATH OF MRS. BURR — THE ORPHANED CHILDREN — SARAH BURR.

Two children blessed the union of President Burr with Esther Edwards; Sarah Burr, born May 3d, 1754; and AARON BURR, born February 6th, 1756. Newark, in New Jersey, was the birth-place of both these children.

The college buildings at Princeton were nearly completed when Aaron was born. In the autumn of that year, the removal took place; the college of New Jersey added a local habitation to its well-earned name. The president, to the great sorrow of his congregation, resigned the pastorship of the Newark church, which he had served for twenty years with the ever-growing love of its members. The good people would scarcely let him go. They said that the connection between pastor and flock, like that between husband and wife, was indissoluble, except by death or infidelity. To this day, the First Presbyterian church* of Newark cherishes with affectionate pride the memory of this man, eminent among the many eminent men who have stood in its pulpit.

To Princeton, then, the president and his family removed late in the year 1756. A letter by one of the trustees of the college at that time, sets forth that "the salary of the president is two hundred pounds proclamation money, with the perquisites, amounting at present to about thirty pounds, and yearly increasing; a large, well-finished dwelling-house, gardens, barn, out-houses, etc., with a considerable quantity of pasture-ground and firewood, do also belong to the president."

* History of the First Church at Newark, N. J., by Rev. Dr. Stearns.

All this was, probably, equal to an income of three thousand dollars at the present time.

And now, having lived to establish on a firm foundation the College of New Jersey, President Burr's work on earth was done. The manner of his death was in keeping with his character. At the end of the summer of 1757, in very hot weather, he made one of his swift journeys to Stockbridge. What it was to *travel*, a hundred years ago, is sufficiently known. Returning rapidly to Princeton, he went immediately to Elizabethtown, a hard day's ride, to procure from the authorities there a legal exemption of the students from military duty. The next day, though much indisposed, he preached a funeral sermon at Newark, five miles distant. Then he returned to Princeton. In a few days he went to Philadelphia on other business of the college, and, on his return, was met by the intelligence that his friend, and the college's friend, Governor Belcher, had just died at Elizabethtown, and that himself had been designated to preach the funeral sermon. His wife besought him to be just to himself, and decline the office. But he, accustomed to subdue obstacles, and desirous to do honor to his departed friend, sat down, all fatigued and feverish as he was, to prepare his sermon. Before he slept, it was finished. That night he was delirious, but in the morning he set off for Elizabethtown; and on the day following, with a languor and exhaustion he could no longer conceal, he preached the sermon. Unconquered yet, he next day returned home, where his fever, from being intermittent, became fixed and violent. At the approach of death, he was resigned and cheerful. He felt assured of immortality. On his death-bed he gave orders that his funeral should be as inexpensive as was consistent with decency, and that the sum thus saved should be given to the poor. On the 24th of September, 1757, in the forty-second year of his age, this good man died.

His death was widely and sincerely mourned. His funeral sermon; the eulogiums pronounced upon him by the Governor of New Jersey; the notices of his death in the public journals, and many private letters in which the sad event is mentioned,

have come down to us; and all speak of him in terms that would seem extravagant eulogy to one unacquainted with the noble heart, the brilliant intellect, the beneficent life of President Burr. In the letters of his wife, it is easy to see *through* the pious phraseology of the day, the heart-broken woman. "O, dear madam," writes the poor bereaved lady to her mother, "I doubt not but I have your, and my honored father's prayers, daily, for me; but, give me leave to intreat you both, to request earnestly of the Lord that I may never despise his chastenings, nor faint under this his severe stroke; of which I am sensible there is great danger, if God should only deny me the supports that he has hitherto graciously granted. O, I am afraid I shall conduct myself so as to bring dishonor on my God, and the religion which I profess! No, rather let me die this moment than be left to bring dishonor on God's holy name. I am overcome. I must conclude, with once more begging that, as my dear parents remember themselves, they would not forget their greatly-afflicted daughter (now a lonely widow), nor her fatherless children."

A letter to her father, written a month after the above, besides being very pathetic, contains allusions to her boy, then twenty-one months old: "Since I wrote my mother a letter, God has carried me through new trials, and given me new supports. My little son has been sick with a slow fever, ever since my brother left us, and has been brought to the brink of the grave; but, I hope in mercy, God is bringing him back again. I was enabled, after a severe struggle with nature, to resign the child with the greatest freedom. God showed me that the children were not my own, but his, and that he had a right to recall what he had lent, whenever he thought fit; and that I had no reason to complain, or say that God was hard with me. This silenced me. But O how good is God. He not only kept me from complaining, but comforted me, by enabling me to offer up my child by faith, if ever I acted faith. I saw the fulness there was in Christ for little infants, and his willingness to accept of such as were offered to him. 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;' were comforting words. God also showed me, in such a lively

manner, the fulness there was in himself of all spiritual blessings, that I said, 'Although all streams are cut off, yet so long as my God lives, I have enough.' He enabled me to say, 'Although thou slay me, yet will I trust in thee.' In this time of trial, I was led to enter into a renewed and explicit covenant with God, in a more solemn manner than ever before; and with the greatest freedom and delight, after much self-examination and prayer, I did give myself and my children to God, with my whole heart. Never, until then, had I an adequate sense of the privilege we are allowed in covenanting with God. This act of soul left my mind in a great calm, and steady trust in God. A few days after this, one evening, in talking of the glorious state my dear departed husband must be in, my soul was carried out in such large desires after that glorious state, that I was forced to retire from the family to conceal my joy. When alone I was so transported, and my soul carried out in such eager desires after perfection and the full enjoyment of God, and to serve him uninterruptedly, that I think my nature would not have borne much more. I think, dear sir, I had that night, a foretaste of heaven. This frame continued, in some good degree, the whole night. I slept but little, and when I did, my dreams were all of heavenly and divine things. Frequently since, I have felt the same in kind, though not in degree. This was about the time that God called me to give up my child. Thus a kind and gracious God has been with me, in six troubles and in seven."

In these utterances of a broken heart struggling against the impiety of despair, there is no trace of the peculiar character of Aaron Burr's mother. Of the children of Jonathan Edwards, not one was a common-place person, and scarcely one even of his grandchildren. But Mrs. Burr was, perhaps, the flower of the family. One of her relations has written of her these sentences: "She exceeded most of her sex in the beauty of her person, as well as in her behavior and conversation. She discovered an unaffected, natural freedom, toward persons of all ranks, with whom she conversed. Her genius was much more than common. She had a lively, sprightly imagination, a quick and penetrating discernment, and a good judgment.

She possessed an uncommon degree of wit and vivacity; which yet was consistent with pleasantness and good nature; and she knew how to be facetious and sportive, without trespassing on the bounds of decorum, or of strict and serious religion. In short, she seemed formed to please, and especially to please one of Mr. Burr's taste and character, in whom he was exceedingly happy. But what crowned all her excellences, and was her chief glory, was RELIGION. She appeared to be the subject of divine impressions when seven or eight years old; and she made a public profession of religion when about fifteen. Her conversation, until her death, was exemplary, as becometh godliness. She was, in every respect, an ornament to her sex, being equally distinguished for the suavity of her manners, her literary accomplishments, and her unfeigned regard to religion. Her religion did not cast a gloom over her mind, but made her cheerful and happy, and rendered the thought of death transporting. She left a number of manuscripts, on interesting subjects, and it was hoped they would have been made public; but they are now lost."

Death had only begun his fell work in their family. Jonathan Edwards was immediately elected to succeed Mr. Burr in the presidency of the college. Soon after his arrival at Princeton, he heard of the death of his father, a venerable clergyman of Connecticut, in the eighty-ninth year of his age. Two months after, before he had fully entered upon his duties as president, died Jonathan Edwards himself, of a fever which followed inoculation for small-pox. Sixteen days after, of a similar disease, Mrs. Burr died. Her two orphaned children were taken from her funeral to the house of an old friend of the family in Philadelphia, where they remained six months. In the fall of the same year, the widow of Jonathan Edwards went to Philadelphia with the intention of conveying the little orphans to her own home, and bringing them up with her own children. At Philadelphia, she was seized with the dysentery, and she too died. Thus within a period of thirteen months, these children were of father, mother, great grandfather, and grand parents, all bereft; and there was no one left in the

wide world whose chief concern it could be to see that they received no detriment.

All but the great grandfather lie buried at Princeton, where the virtues and graces of the two presidents are elaborately set forth in lapidary Latin. Strange to say, some of the letters respecting the carving of President Burr's tomb-stone have escaped the chances of destruction for a hundred years, and are still legible to the biographic eye.

President Burr left his children considerable property; enough for their independent maintenance, even in maturity. They were reared at Elizabethtown, New Jersey, in the family of the Rev. Timothy Edwards, President Edwards's eldest son. A private tutor, Mr. Tappan Reeve, afterward Judge of the Supreme Court of Connecticut, superintended their earliest studies, and in due time fell in love with his pretty pupil, Sarah Burr, and when she was seventeen married her. That she loved her brother dearly, is all that is known of Sarah Burr's childhood. One of Aaron's early correspondents says that she approved of her brother's going to the war in 1775, which, he adds, "is a great proof of patriotism in a sister so affectionate as yours." She was of a noble, commanding face and figure. As she was for many years an invalid, and died at a comparatively early age, she had little to do with her brother's life, though she left upon his memory a tender recollection of her worth and loveliness, which he cherished and spoke of to his dying day.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EDUCATION OF AARON BURR.

ELIZABETHTOWN—ANECDOTES OF BURR'S CHILDHOOD—HIS CAREER AT COLLEGE—GOES TO DR. BELLAMY'S THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL—REJECTS THE PURITANIC THEOLOGY—FOND OF LADIES' SOCIETY—STUDIES LAW.

ELIZABETHTOWN was then, as it is now, a village containing an unusual proportion of polite families. It had been the residence of the governor and other officials of the province. The vicinity is a level, red-soiled, unattractive region; but a little river flows through it, emptying, at a point one mile from the village, into Staten Island Sound, which is part of the intricate system of waters that affords so many beautiful highways to the city of New York. That city is fifteen miles distant. Within excursion distance is Staten Island, where, during Aaron Burr's childhood, large bodies of British troops were frequently encamped.

From the three anecdotes of Burr's childhood, which have come down to us, we may infer that he was a troublesome ward to his reverend uncle. That gentleman, a conscientious Puritan clergyman, tried the system of *repression* upon a boy who could not be repressed; and the result was, that the young gentleman was frequently in a state of rebellion. The authority for these anecdotes was Colonel Burr himself, who used to relate the two principal ones with great glee.

When he was four years old, he took offense at his tutor, and ran away. He contrived to elude the search for three or four days, and—there the story ends.

About his eighth year, the following incident occurred: He was in a cherry-tree in his uncle's garden, one fine afternoon in July, when he observed, coming up the walk, an elderly lady, a guest of the house, wearing a silk dress, which

was then a rare luxury. The prim behavior and severe morality of this ancient maiden had made her a somewhat odious object in the sight of the boy. Concealed in the tree, he amused himself by throwing cherries at her: upon observing which, she angrily sought Uncle Timothy, to tell him of Aaron's misconduct. The boy was summoned to the study, where the case was treated in the severe Puritanic method. First came a long lecture upon the enormity of the offense; which was followed by a long prayer for the offender's reformation. From the beginning of these ceremonies, the boy well knew how they were to end, and he could form an idea of the severity of the coming punishment from the length of the prayer and exhortation. A terrible castigation followed; or, as Burr used to phrase it, "he licked me like a sack."

Those were the days, it should be borne in mind, when the old received something like *homage* from the young. The children of Jonathan Edwards, for example, rose at the entrance of their parents; and when they met in the street a clergyman or old person, they stood aside, took off their hats, and bowed, and waited till the reverend individual had gone by. In the eyes of Uncle Timothy, therefore, the boy's affront to his elderly guest would seem a crime of audacious magnitude.

At the age of ten, Aaron had the fancy which besets most active boys once during their childhood, to go to sea. A second time he ran away. He went to New York, took the post of cabin-boy on board a ship getting ready for sea, and actually served in that capacity for a short time. But, one day while he was at work on the quarter-deck, he spied a suspicious clerical-looking gentleman coming rapidly down the wharf, who, he soon saw, was his uncle, bent on the capture of a cabin-boy. He sprang into the rigging, and before his uncle got on board the ship, had climbed to the mast-head. He saw his advantage, and resolved to profit by it. He was ordered down, but refused to come. As his uncle was a gentleman who would have been nowhere less at home than at the mast-head of a ship, the command had to soften itself into an entreaty, and it became, finally, a negotiation. Upon the

condition that nothing disagreeable should befall him in consequence of the adventure, the runaway agreed to descend, and go home again to his books.

These little stories exhibit the rebel merely. A decisive fact or two of an opposite nature has been preserved. Pierpont Edwards, another uncle of Aaron Burr's, but only six years his senior, was his schoolfellow for a while at Elizabethtown. One of Pierpont's letters, written when Aaron was seven years old, contains this sentence: "Aaron Burr is here, is hearty, goes to school, *and learns bravely*." The fact of Pierpont Edwards being Burr's schoolfellow, and one who, from his age, talents, and relationship, would be likely to exert great influence upon him, should be noted; for Pierpont Edwards, besides being a great lawyer, was also a remarkably free liver.

There is other testimony to Aaron's diligence as a student. At the age of eleven he was prepared for college, and applying for admission at Princeton, was rejected on account of his youth. He was not only too young, but the smallness of his stature made the application seem ridiculous. He was then a strikingly pretty boy, very fair, with beautiful black eyes, and such graceful, engaging ways as rendered him a favorite. What the qualifications were for admission into college, at that time, may be inferred from another remark in the letter of Pierpont Edwards just quoted. "I am reading Virgil and Greek grammar," he says; "I would have entered college, but my constitution would not bear it, being weak." A boy able to read Virgil, and who knew the Greek alphabet, could have obtained admission into the Freshman class at Princeton at that time. But, considering the imperfect aids to the acquisition of the language which schoolboys then had, we may assign the character of a forward and industrious boy to one who was ready for college at the age of eleven.

This rejection on account of his want of years and inches was a source of deep mortification to the aspiring lad. He did his best, however, to frustrate the college authorities by mastering at home the studies of the first two college years, and then, in his thirteenth year, applying for admission into

the Junior class. This, too, was denied him; and, more as a favor than as a right, he was allowed to enter the Sophomore class. He should have been fifteen years old to have joined the Sophomores. It was in 1769, during the presidency of Dr. Witherspoon, a Scotch clergyman, in whose veins flowed the blood of John Knox, that Aaron Burr began his residence at Princeton.

His career at college was similar to that of thousands of American youth. He went to Princeton with extravagant ideas of the acquirements of collegians; but with a resolution to be equal with the foremost. The first year he studied excessively hard. Finding that he could not acquire as well in the afternoon as in the morning, and attributing the fact to his eating too much, he became very abstemious, and was then able to study sixteen, and occasionally eighteen, hours a day. He became pale, and was supposed to be in ill health. When the day of examination came, he found himself so much in advance of his classmates, that the motive to such extraordinary exertions no longer existed, and, thenceforward, he was as idle as he had formerly been industrious.

It has been said, and apparently on his own authority, that he was dissipated at college; but his dissipation could scarcely have been of an immoral nature. Princeton was then a very small village, nearly surrounded by dense forests, in the midst of a region containing, at wide intervals, a settlement of Quakers or Dutch. There was no large town or navigable water within many miles. The village was the half-way station, on the high road between New York and Philadelphia, travelers to either of which would usually stop at Princeton at night. A coach load of people, and several other travelers, were at the tavern nearly every night in the week. For their amusement, a billiard table was kept in the place, but Burr played only one game. On that occasion, it chanced that he won a small sum, and on going home, he felt so degraded by the circumstance, that he resolved never more to play at any game for money; and he kept his resolution. At the tavern, too, the students could procure the luxuries of the table. But Burr, then and always, was a Spartan in eating

and drinking. And with regard to guiltier pleasures, he was but sixteen when he graduated; the place of his residence was rustic and Puritanic Princeton; and the time was not far removed from the days of the "Scarlet Letter." It was not till after he had left college that he adopted the opinions which took the reins of passion out of the hands of conscience, and gave them into those of prudence.

Part of Burr's dissipation in college was merely a dissipation of mind in multifarious reading. That he was versed in the polite literature of the day, is evident in his compositions. He was, also, a constant reader of the lives and histories of great military men. During Burr's boyhood, the fame of Frederic the Great filled the world. The Seven Years' War began when he was in the cradle, and the most brilliant achievements of the great captain were fresh in men's minds while the youth was in his susceptible years. As the supposed champion of Protestantism against the leagued Catholic powers, Frederic was greatly admired in the American provinces, and the splendor of his reputation may have had its share in giving Burr his life-long love for the military profession. The old French war, too, was not concluded when Burr first saw the light. The provinces were full of wild tales of that most romantic of contests, during all of his earlier years. And long before he left college, were heard the mutterings of the coming storm which was to summon from their retirement, and crown with new laurels, so many of the rustic soldiers who had won distinction in that toughly-contested forest war which secured this continent to the race which holds it now.

A college freak of Burr's excited a great deal of mirth among the students at the time. He was a member of a literary club, the Clio-Sophic, the members of which presided at its meetings in rotation. On one occasion, when Burr was in the chair, a professor of the college, from whom he had received many an unwelcome admonition, chanced to come in after the business of the evening had commenced. Burr, assuming as much of professorial dignity as his diminutive stature admitted, and with that imperturbable self-possession for which he was distinguished, ordered the professor to rise. He

then began to lecture the delinquent upon his want of punctuality, observing that the older members of the society were expected to set a better example to the younger, and concluding with a hope that he should not be under the necessity of recurring again to the subject. Having thus given the professor a parody of one of those harangues which preceptors are prone to bestow upon neglectful pupils, he informed him that he might resume his seat; which the astonished gentleman did, amid the merriment of the society. This story used to be told of Burr at Princeton, years after he had left college.

His college compositions, of which several have been preserved, indicate an unusual maturity in a youth of fifteen years. *Style* is the subject of one of them, the burden of which is to recommend conciseness and simplicity, which were always the characteristics of his own writings. "A laboured style is labor even to the hearer," observes the young critic, "but, a simple style, like simple food, preserves the appetite." He contends for a *colloquial* manner, and mentions Sir Thomas Browne's Treatise on "Vulgar Errors" as an example of absurd pomposity. "There is no such thing," remarks the youth, "as a *sublime style;* sublimity is in the *thought*, which is rendered the more sublime by being expressed in simple language." This is not the usual tone of a college composition. Another of Burr's college essays, is on *The Passions*. He could not have read Goethe's oft-declaimed observation, "Man alone is interesting to Man," because Goethe at this time was himself a college student at Strasbourg; yet Burr opens his discourse upon the passions quite in the spirit of the Goethean maxim. Nor could he have known the office assigned the passions by phrenologists, for Gall was then a boy three years old; yet he says that the grand design of the passions is to rouse to action the sluggish powers of the mind. "The passions," he adds, "if properly regulated, are the gentle gales which keep life from stagnating, but, if let loose, the tempests which tear every thing before them." He continues in the following strain: "Do we not frequently behold men of the most sprightly genius, by giving the reins to their passions, lost to

society, and reduced to the lowest ebb of misery and despair? Do we not frequently behold persons of the most penetrating discernment and happy turn for polite literature, by mingling with the sons of sensuality and riot, blasted in the bloom of life? Such was the fate of the late celebrated Duke of Wharton, Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, and Villers, Duke of Buckingham, three noblemen, as eminently distinguished by their wit, taste, and knowledge, as for their extravagance, revelry and lawless passions. In such cases, the most charming elocution, the finest fancy, the brightest blaze of genius, and the noblest bursts of thought, call for louder vengeance, and damn them to lasting infamy and shame." He says, in conclusion, "Permit me, however unusual, to close with a wish. May none of these unruly passions ever captivate any of my audience."

One of these college pieces, entitled "An Attempt to Search the Origin of Idolatry," is interesting, as showing that the writer, whatever may have been his subsequent opinions, was, while in college, a sharer in the faith of his fathers. His conclusion is, that the accursed Ham, or his accursed sons, were the inventors of idol worship. An incidental opinion expressed in this piece is, that atheism is more odious than idolatry.

It is unsafe to infer the character of a writer from the character of his writings, as the power of some writers consists in an ability to give striking expression to emotions which they merely see it would be highly becoming in them to feel. But we would scarcely believe this of a boy of fifteen. So far as Burr's youthful essays do reveal his character, they seem to show that, at this period of his life, he possessed an acute intellect, an independent habit of thought, and an ingenuous, amiable disposition. During Burr's last winter in college, there occurred one of those periodical excitements with regard to religion which were so important a feature in the early history of the provinces; an excitement similar to that which had diverted Burr's grandfather from natural science to theology, and won his father from the enthusiastic pursuit of classical literature. This revival was one of more than ordinary intensity, and a large number of the students became converts.

Burr, then very idle, and devoted to such pleasures as the rustic neighborhood afforded, was urged both by the professors and by his companions, to renounce his way of life and follow the example of his eminent ancestors. But he held quietly aloof. As the excitement increased, his friends redoubled their efforts. They appealed to his fears, threatening him with all the terrific penalties of the law, if *he*, descended from such illustrious exemplars of the faith, *he*, the son of a father so eloquent in its promulgation, of a mother who had so longed and importuned for his conversion, should finally become a castaway. Burr confessed that he was moved by this revival. He respected the religion of his mother; he had taken for granted the creed in which he had been educated. Therefore, though he was repelled by the wild excitement that prevailed, and disgusted by the means employed to excite terror, his mind was not at ease. He consulted Dr. Witherspoon in this perplexity. The clergymen of the time were divided in opinion upon the subject of revivals: those educated in the old country being generally opposed to them. President Witherspoon was of that number, and he accordingly told the anxious student that the raging excitement was fanatical, not truly religious, and Burr went away relieved.

It is not unlikely that if the promoters of that revival had appealed solely to his sense of the becoming and the just, Aaron Burr might have been won to their views, and might have lived over again, on a greater scale, and with greater results, the life of his father. But the attempt to strike terror in the soul of one who never knew what it was to be afraid, was a failure, of course.

A habit formed by Burr, at college, had an important influence upon his fortunes at the critical point of his career. It was the habit of writing his confidential letters *in cipher*. The practice was common at the time. The letters of all the eminent men of the revolutionary period, Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, Adams, and the rest, contained evidence of *an habitual distrust of the public conveyance of letters*. This distrust existed before the Revolution, during the Revolution, and after the Revolution: down, in fact, to the time when the

mere multitude of letters was their best protection. The fear was not so much that letters would not reach their destination, as that they would be read on the way. Burr's practice, therefore, of writing in cipher to his sister and to his classmates, was in conformity with the feeling and habit of the time, and not merely an evidence of a peculiarly secretive character. But he was secretive—often absurdly so—as his adoption of this custom in his boyish correspondence might have led one to suspect.

He formed friendships in college that ended only with life. William Patterson, afterward a Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States; the gallant Colonel Matthias Ogden, of New Jersey; Samuel Spring, who became a distinguished divine, and who was the father of Dr. G. Spring, a still more eminent theologian, were among those whom he loved at college, and who loved him while they lived. Samuel Spring became a student of theology at Newport before Burr graduated, and he wrote to his friend upon the charms of divinity, and in a modest, manly way, urged him to fulfill the hopes of his parents by devoting himself to the same pursuit.

In September, 1772, when he was sixteen years of age, Burr graduated at the College of New Jersey with distinction. He delivered an oration on commencement-day with considerable, but not distinguished, applause. His manner and bearing were graceful. The matter of his discourse was good, but he spoke with uneffective rapidity, and with an emphasis so frequent and intense as to partly defeat the object of emphasis. Nevertheless, his friend Patterson was of opinion that, if Burr was not the best of the speakers, there was but one who excelled him.

He continued to live at Princeton for several months after receiving his degree, during which he read extensively, reviewed some of his college studies, added many volumes to his collection of books, took part in the exercises of the Clio-Sophic Society, and amused himself to the extent afforded by the place in which he lived. His income was ample for the maintenance of a young man, and he was in no haste to choose a profession. In the spring and summer of 1773, he was

much at Elizabethtown. One of his favorite pleasures there was boating, an amusement for which the neighboring waters afford facilities perhaps unrivaled in the world. Burr knew every inlet and islet of those waters, and could manage a boat with much skill. The experience gained in his aquatic excursions there was turned by him to excellent account on several occasions in his subsequent career of adventure and vicissitude.

A year of busy idleness the youth passed in these scenes before he began to think seriously of the future. After leaving college, and indeed long before, he was quite his own master, his uncle having early relinquished his endeavors to control the movements of a ward who knew how, in all circumstances, to have his own way. But a profession was now to be chosen. His relations, the friends of his father, and many in whose memory the mother of this youth was still most fresh and fragrant, hoped, *expected*, that he would, in due time, be attracted to the profession which so many of his ancestors had adorned. Not wantonly, nor hastily did he decide to disappoint these expectations. The uneasiness of mind which had been created during the great revival at Princeton, had been allayed, but not removed, by his conversation with Dr. Witherspoon, and he was now determined upon settling his theologic difficulties for ever. A mind so active, penetrating, and fearless as his, *must* have come in contact with the skepticism that was then the rage in Europe, and which had captivated the Jeffersons and Franklins of America. He could not have escaped it, for it pervaded the books which he was most sure to be drawn to. He resolved, therefore, instead of subjecting himself to be tried *by* the theology of the day, which was what his pious friends desired, to put that theology itself upon trial.

Dr. Joseph Bellamy, of Bethlehem, Connecticut, who had studied theology under Jonathan Edwards, was, in some degree, the inheritor of his master's preëminent position in the clerical world. Great was his fame as a preacher. His published works were popular in his life-time, and continued to be printed many years after his death; and so many candidates

for the ministry repaired to him for instruction in divinity, that his house assumed something of the importance of a theological seminary. To this learned and famous doctor, young Burr addressed himself, and requested permission to reside in his school while he was employed in the study of theology. With the joyful consent of his guardian, and to the great satisfaction of Doctor Bellamy, Burr, in the autumn of 1773, went to live in the doctor's family, and entered at once with his usual ardor upon the investigations he had proposed to himself. Doctor Bellamy, it appears, was one of the gentlemen who plumed themselves upon their skill in the Socratic or question-asking method of argumentation in which Franklin, among many others of the time, took great delight. The object of the honest divine was, as we said, to prevent his pupils from taking any dogma for granted, or from accepting their opinions without consideration from the lips of their teacher. Sometimes he would exchange with one of them the part of Socrates, himself playing disciple, and submitting to as severe a course of questions as the skill of the young gentleman enabled him to devise.

This were a dangerous game to play with a lad of Burr's mettle. When both Socrates and disciple are perfectly agreed beforehand as to the conclusion to which the argument is to conduct them; when, in a word, the exercise is merely *play*, it may be amusing and satisfactory. But when the disciple has begun to suspect that Socrates is behind the age, inasmuch as the choice spirits of the age are not at all of his way of thinking, and when that disciple, beside being utterly fearless of the consequences of dissent, possessed a remarkable address and imperturbable coolness in arranging his questions; in such circumstances, Socrates is likely to lose a pupil. Between Dr. Bellamy and Aaron Burr, precisely the same catastrophe occurred as came to pass a year or two later in Germany between young Jean Paul and the Conrector of the Hof Gymnasium.

The zealous conrector, as we read in Carlyle's exquisite article upon Jean Paul, desirous to render his school as much like a university as possible, had public disputations in the

school occasionally. "By ill-luck one day, the worthy president had selected some church-article for the theme of such a disputation; one boy was to defend, and it fell to Paul's lot to impugn the dogma; a task he was very specially qualified to undertake. Now, honest Paul knew nothing of the limits of this game; never dreamt but he might argue with his whole strength, to whatever results it might lead. In a few rounds, accordingly, his antagonist was borne out of the ring, as good as lifeless; and the conrector himself, seeing the danger, had, as it were, to descend from his presiding chair, and clap the gauntlets on his own more experienced hands. But Paul, nothing daunted, gave him also a Roland for an Oliver; nay, as it became more and more manifest to all eyes, was fast reducing him also to the frightfullest extremity. The conrector's tongue threatened cleaving to the roof of his mouth, for his brain was at a stand, or whirling in eddies, only his gall was in active play. Nothing remained for him but to close the debate abruptly by a '*Silence, sirrah, and leave the room.*'"

All over the world, in that century of skepticism, similar scenes were transpiring. At Oxford, in England, as Bentham records, "infidelity" was the fashion; there were Atheist's clubs in the university. A few years later, a similar state of things existed at Yale, which required all the eloquence and tact of the able President Dwight to suppress.

A few months' residence with Dr. Bellamy sufficed for Burr. We soon find him writing to his friend Ogden, at Elizabethtown, that he had the good old doctor completely *under his thumb!* Ogden replies that he is glad to hear it; and proceeds to give Burr the gossip of the fashionable society at New York. In the summer of 1774, Burr left Dr. Bellamy with the conviction, to use his own language, that "the road to heaven was open to all alike." In other words, he rejected the gospel, according to Jonathan Edwards; rejected it, as he always maintained, after a calm and full investigation; rejected it completely and for ever. To the close of his life, he avoided disputes upon questions of religion; and when, on one or two occasions only, he was drawn into such a discussion, he re-

proached himself for his folly afterward. Often he was addressed by relatives, anxious to see him treading in the footsteps of his father. Often letters were sent him, warning him to repent. He neither resented nor regarded these well-meant endeavors; but waived them aside with good-humored grace, and sometimes even with tenderness.

The gospel which the young man accepted, lived by and died in, was the gospel according to Philip Dormer Stanhope, Lord Chesterfield; which, from Burr's day to this, has been cultivated Young America's usual poor recoil from the Puritanism of its childhood. Chesterfield himself was not a more consummate Chesterfieldian than Aaron Burr. The intrepidity, the self-possession, the consideration for others, the pursuit of knowledge, which Chesterfield commends, were all illustrated in the character of the young American, who also availed himself of the *license* which that perfect man of the world allowed himself, and recommended to his son.

The summer of 1774 Burr spent at Litchfield, Connecticut, at the house of Mr. Tappan Reeve, his brother-in-law. He had decided to study law, but, in no haste to begin, he passed some months in reading, riding, hunting, and flirting. Already, he possessed that power of pleasing the fair for which he was afterward noted, and already officious relations began to speculate upon him as a subject for matrimony. Uncle Thaddeus Burr, as we learn from one of Aaron's letters, had his eye upon a young lady, whose person and fortune he was fond of extolling in his handsome nephew's hearing. But the nephew was deaf and dumb on those occasions, and resolved, at length, to be round with Uncle Thaddeus, when next he should indulge in these broad hints. At the same time, the young beau was all gallantry to the ladies, who evidently occupied themselves more than a little in gossiping about him; but he seems to have distributed his attentions so equally among them all, that no two people could agree on the same lady to tease him with. One lady, he tells his friend Ogden, had actually made love to him, which, he says, made him feel foolish enough. His letters, after leaving Dr. Bellamy and theology, contain very frequent allusions to 'the girls.' They were evidently, during

the leisure months of 1774, the chief subject of his thoughts, and one of the most frequent objects of his attention.

Now, too, his instinctive love of intrigue began to exhibit itself. A friend of his received a letter from a young female relative, which Burr, for a joke, offered to answer, and did answer, in the name of his friend. He carried on a correspondence with the girl in this way, but, as he told Ogden, avoided scrupulously to draw from her any thing she would choose he should not know. "I would suffer crucifixion," he said, "rather than be guilty of such unparalleled meanness." A horror of meanness is frequently expressed in Burr's early letters. "My idea of a devil," he once observed, "is composed more of malice than of meanness." There are hints of other intrigues with fair ladies in these joyous letters, but so vaguely expressed as to convey no information to the reader.

The impression left on the mind of any candid reader of Burr's correspondence at this period, is favorable to him. A gay, handsome, innocent, honorable, rollicking young man, high-spirited, fond of the girls, an enthusiastic friend, an intelligent reader, and an independent thinker. Every body liked him, and many predicted his future eminence. Of his own immediate circle of friends, he was the youngest, but it is evident that they all unconsciously regarded him as a kind of chief. They speak of his generous heart, and his excellent judgment, and betray in all their letters to him a friendship of the warmest character.

As the winter of 1774 drew on, these happy young men were drawn from the light pursuits proper to their age by the portentous aspect now assumed by the quarrel between the colonies and the mother country. New England was alive with excitement. Her younger spirits, so far from fearing, had begun to desire a conflict with the royal troops. Burr and his set had been ardent Whigs from the beginning of the dispute. They had studied the subject together, and Burr, in particular, had made himself master of the law of the case, and renewed with enthusiasm the military studies which had always interested him. As early as August, 1774, we find him eager for the fray. A mob had torn down the house of a man

suspected of being unfriendly to the liberties of the people, and the sheriff, who had arrested eight of the ringleaders, brought them to Litchfield, where Burr was. The next day, fifty horsemen, each armed with a white club, marched into Litchfield to rescue the prisoners, and Burr sallied forth to join in the threatened contest. But, to his boundless disgust, the horsemen could not be induced to make the attempt, and to crown the infamy of the occasion, he says, "the above mentioned *sneaks* all gave bonds for their appearance to stand a trial at the next court for committing a riot." From the manner in which Burr narrates this incident, it is certain that he was ready for the great fight, eight months before the first blood was shed.

In those months, he began the study of the law under Mr. Tappan Reeve, at Litchfield, and had made some slight progress therein when the news of LEXINGTON, the news that *blood* had been shed, electrified the thirteen colonies, and summoned to arms their gallant spirits of every degree.

CHAPTER V.

THE VOLUNTEER.

His Qualifications as a Soldier — Joins the Army Around Boston — Arnold's Expedition to Quebec — Burr's Secret Mission from Arnold to Montgomery — Appointed aid to General Montgomery — The Assault upon Quebec — Captain Burr bears off the Body of his General — Appointed Aid to General Washington — Reasons of his Discontent in that Situation.

As one who had been waiting for the signal, this young student-at-law threw aside his books, and seized the sword, on fire to join the patriot forces gathered around glorious Boston.

He felt that he was formed to excel as a soldier. A mere stripling in appearance, with a stature of five feet six inches, a slender form, and a youthful face, he yet possessed a power of prolonged exertion, and a capacity for enduring privation, that were wonderful in a youth of nineteen. His courage was perfect—he never knew fear; even his nerves could not be startled by any kind of sudden horror. He was a good horseman, a good helmsman, a tolerable fencer, and a decent shot. Moreover, he loved the military art; knew all of it that could be learned from books, and more highly prized the soldier's glory than that of any other pursuit. To these qualities he added a mind cultivated and most fertile in those suggestions for which the exigencies of war furnish such frequent occasions. And with all his power to win the confiding love of equals and inferiors, men saw in his face and bearing what Kent loved in Lear, *authority!*

No period of Aaron Burr's life is better known than the time he spent in the revolutionary army. Two or three times, in the latter part of his life, he was a claimant under the pension and compensation acts passed for the benefit of the soldiers of the Revolution; and, to substantiate his claim, his fellow-soldiers gave written and sworn testimony respecting his

services, some of them narrating, with great particularity, exploits of his which they had themselves witnessed. Much of this evidence was given by persons well known for their public services, and of veracity beyond question. The number, the coincidence, and the enthusiasm of these depositions, place the essential truth of their statements beyond reasonable doubt. Burr, too, in his old age, loved to talk over those bright years of his youth, and some of the incidents about to be related were derived directly from friends of the old soldier, to whom he used to tell them. He was proud of his military career. What he achieved in law and in politics were as nothing in his eyes in comparison with his deeds as a soldier of the revolutionary army.

On hearing of the battle of Lexington, he wrote immediately to his friend Ogden, urging him to come with all possible rapidity to Litchfield, and they would then together start for the scene of war. But Ogden replied that he could not in such haste make preparations to leave home. Burr wrote again. While Ogden seemed still undecided, came the most thrilling piece of news that breath ever uttered on this continent—the news that a thousand of the flower of the British army had fallen on Bunker Hill under the fire of a band of rustic patriots. Burr could bear inactivity no longer. He mounted his horse, and rode in hot haste to Elizabethtown; there aided Ogden in his preparations for a campaign; and the two friends then made their way to the camp near Boston. They arrived in July, 1775, only a few days after General Washington had taken the command.

The scene presented to the eyes of the commander-in-chief on his arrival at Cambridge has been too often described to require more than an allusion here. In the various camps and posts around the city, there were seventeen thousand half-armed, ill-clad, undisciplined, and unorganized troops, commanded by officers who were either ignorant of their duty, or reluctant to give offense by performing it. The health of the men was endangered by the want of a camp police to enforce the regulations, without which large bodies of men can not exist together. Burr was not prepared for such a scene

of disorder, and still less for the inactivity to which this motley host was condemned. He, and thousands of others, had rushed to the seat of war in the hope that Lexington and Bunker Hill were to be followed up by affairs still more decisive; and this nameless boy, of course, caught no whisper of the dreadful secret, confided only to general officers, that there was not powder enough in the whole army to fight another Bunker Hill, if the occasion should arise. As the youth wandered from camp to camp, he became a prey to disappointment, mortification, and disgust; and, after passing a month of this most wearisome idleness, he actually fretted himself into a kind of intermittent fever, and was confined for several days sick in body and in mind.

One day, as he was tossing in his bed, he overheard Ogden and others talking in the next room of an expedition that was on foot. He called Ogden to his bedside, and asked what expedition it was of which they had been talking. Ogden replied, that Colonel Arnold was about to march with a thousand volunteers through the forests of Maine to attack Quebec, and thus complete the conquest of Canada so gloriously begun by General Montgomery, who was already master of Montreal. Instantly Burr sat up in bed, and declared his determination to join the expedition; and, quietly disregarding Ogden's remonstrances, began, enfeebled as he was, to dress himself. All his friends in the army were aghast at his resolution. But no argument and no persuasion could move him when his mind was made up. Go he would. Under the stimulus of a congenial object, his health improved, and in a very few days he was ready to proceed to the rendezvous at Newburyport, distant sixty miles from Boston. Ogden and others of Burr's acquaintance were conveyed to Newburyport in carriages; but Burr, accompanied by four or five stout fellows whom he had equipped at his own expense, shouldered his knapsack and marched the whole distance.

In the mean time, his Uncle Timothy had heard of his unmanageable ward's intention, and loving the lad none the less for the trouble he had given him, dispatched a messenger, post-haste, to bring the fugitive back, peaceably if he could, forcibly

if he must. The messenger conveyed to Burr a letter from his uncle *commanding* his return, and a whole budget of epistles from other friends, setting forth the horror of the contemplated march, and imploring him to give it up. "You will *die*," wrote a young physician of his acquaintance, "I *know* you will die in the undertaking; it is *impossible* for you to endure the fatigue." Upon reading his uncle's peremptory letter, he looked coolly up at the messenger, and said: "Suppose I refuse to go, how do you expect to take me back? If you were to attempt it by force, I would have you hung up in ten minutes." The messenger paused a moment; then gave him a second letter from his uncle, upon opening which Burr discovered a remittance in gold. In this letter his uncle used entreaties only. It was full of the most affectionate and endearing expressions, depicted the inevitable miseries of such a march, and the grief that would afflict his family if he should fall. Burr was moved—his feelings, but not his resolution. Tears filled his eyes as he read this letter, but he could not now retire from a scheme in which his heart, and, as he supposed, his honor, was embarked. He told his uncle so in respectful and tender language, thanking him for the care he had taken of his childhood, and explaining why he could not in this instance comply with his desire. The messenger departed, and the young soldier rushed upon his destiny.

On the 20th of September, the troops, eleven hundred in number, embarked at Newburyport, in eleven transports; and, sailing to the mouth of the Kennebec, found provided for them there, two hundred light batteaux, suitable for ascending the river. In a few days the little army had gone by the last outpost of civilization, and was working its way through a wilderness of which enough still exists to show the adventurous tourist what it must have been before the foot of civilized man had trodden it. It was a wonderful, an unparalleled march; one that American troops, native to the wilderness, alone could have achieved. For thirty-two days they saw no trace of the presence of human beings. Not once or twice merely, but *thirty times, or more*, the boats, with all their contents, ammunition, provisions, and sick men, had to be carried

by main strength, around rapids and falls, over high and precipitous hills, across wide marshes—until, after toil, under which a tenth of the army sank, and from which another tenth ran away, the boats were launched into the Dead river, where a sudden flood dashed to pieces many of the boats, and destroyed one half of the provisions. Then, all the horrors of starvation threatened the devoted band. In a few days more, they were reduced to live upon dogs and reptiles; and, at length, to devour the leather of their shoes and cartridge-boxes, and any thing, however loathsome, which contained the smallest nutriment. It was fifty days after leaving Newburyport, before Arnold, with the loss of exactly half his force, saw the heights of Quebec. He had brought his gallant army six hundred miles through a hideous wilderness.

The student, bred in comparative luxury, who had come from a sick bed to encounter these fatigues and privations, bore them as well as any man of his party. During the first days in the wilderness, the weather was the most delightful of the Indian summer, and Burr, with his friends Ogden, Wilkinson, Samuel Spring (chaplain to the corps), Dearborn, Ward, and others, sped along through the woods, abreast of the boats, merrily enough. Before the rains set in, and the provisions ran low, he had more than regained his wonted vigor; and in the trying time that succeeded, his habit acquired in college, of living upon a very small quantity of food, stood him in good stead. His hardihood and quick helpfulness attracted general admiration among the troops. His skill in the management of a boat was particularly useful in shooting the rapids, and he was often the helmsman of the boat in the van of his division. All his vigilance, however, did not save him, one bitterly cold day, from a sad mishap. He was running some rapids in the Dead river, when he observed the men on shore making violent gestures, but for what purpose, neither he nor his crew could divine. In a few minutes the rapids became swifter, and the boat was precipitated over a fall twenty feet high. One poor fellow was drowned, half the baggage was lost, and Burr himself reached the shore only with the greatest difficulty. In all ways, on this terrible ex-

pedition, as his companions for fifty years afterward were at all times delighted to testify, he bore himself like a man, a soldier, and a true comrade. It was very hard to make any man think ill of Aaron Burr who was with him then.

Colonel Arnold, the commander of the expedition, gave him a proof of his confidence by intrusting him with a mission of great difficulty. As the force approached Quebec, it became a matter of the first importance to communicate with General Montgomery at Montreal; particularly as Arnold's diminished numbers might render it impossible for him to act against the place without the general's coöperation. To Burr was confided the task of conveying, alone, one hundred and twenty miles through an enemy's country, a verbal message from Arnold, informing Montgomery of his arrival, and of his plans.

In performing this duty, the young soldier gave the first striking proof of his tact and address. Knowing that the French population had never become reconciled to British rule, and that the Catholic clergy especially abhorred it, he assumed the garb and bearing of a young priest, and went directly to a religious house near the camp, and sought an interview with its chief. Burr's Latin was still fresh in his memory; and as he luckily knew French enough to enable him to pronounce Latin in the French manner, he had little difficulty in conversing with the venerable priest, to whose presence he was conducted. A few minutes sufficed to show the young diplomatist that he had found the man he had need of, and he at once frankly avowed his real character, and asked the aid of the clerical order in the prosecution of his journey. The priest gazed at the stripling with astonishment. He thought him a boy, and told him it was impossible for one of his tender years to perform a journey so long and so beset with danger. Finding that the purpose of the young gentleman was irrevocable, and that he was more of a man than his appearance betokened, he gave him a trusty guide, and one of the rude carriages of the country. From one religious family to another the guide conveyed him in perfect safety, and with such comfort as made the journey seem a holiday excursion compared with the recent

march through the wilderness. Only once was his progress interrupted. At Three Rivers the guide found the people excited by rumors of Arnold's arrival, and the authorities on the alert to prevent communication between the two American commanders. The guide, aware that his neck was in danger, refused to proceed further, and urged Burr to lay by till the excitement had in some degree subsided. Concluding that to be the most prudent course, he was concealed for three days in the convent at Three Rivers; at the expiration of which the guide was willing to go forward. They reached Montreal without further detention or alarm. Burr repaired at once to Montgomery's head-quarters, gave the information with which he was charged, and narrated his adventures. That gallant and princely Irishman was so charmed with Burr's address and daring, that he requested him, on the spot, to accept a place on his staff. A few days after, Burr was formally announced as the general's aid-de-camp, with the rank of captain.

It was now near the end of November, the ground was covered with snow, and the severe Canadian winter had set in with its usual rigor. But Montgomery, without a moment's hesitation, and with only the delay necessary for preparation, put himself at the head of a force of three hundred men, and marched, through a succession of blinding snow storms, to join Arnold's troops who were shivering under the heights of Quebec. Arnold had already made an attempt upon the city, and *might* have carried it and won undying honors, and turned the course of revolutionary history, but for the *treason* of an Indian to whom he had given letters for General Schuyler, but who conveyed them and news of the expedition, to the British commandant!

Soon after Montgomery's arrival, a council of war was held, at which Burr and Ogden were both present, and it was determined to make an attempt to take the place by assault. To Captain Burr, at his own request, was assigned the command of a forlorn hope of forty men, whom he forthwith selected, and began to drill. He caused ladders to be made, and exercised his men in using them, until, burdened with all their

equipments, they could mount the ladders with great agility in the darkest night. During those two weeks of preparation, he was all activity. His soul was in arms. Every night, when all but the sentinels slept, he was under those heights where so much glory has been won, familiarizing his eye with every feature of the scene, and weighing all the obstacles to the ascent. Upon the plan of assault originally proposed, parts of which Burr had himself suggested, and for the execution of which he had made his surveys and preparations, he felt confident of success. But at a late day, that plan, for reasons not certainly known, was changed; a circumstance to which Burr always attributed the disastrous failure of the assault.

The attack, it was agreed at the council of war, should take place at night, and in a snow-storm. By the 20th of December the preparations were complete, and nightly the little army awaited the signal, and the sentinel watched the heavens for signs of the gathering storm. The weather was bitterly cold; the small-pox was making fearful ravages among the troops; there was no hope of an alleviation to their sufferings but in capturing the fortress-crowned heights above them. The last night of the year 1775 had come, and a brilliant moon, when the patriot army retired to rest, was flooding with light the fields of snow, the ice-batteries, the town, and the lofty citadel. No one expected to be aroused that night by the familiar signal. But, at midnight, the heavens became suddenly overcast, and a north-easterly snow-storm, of unusual violence, came driving over the scene. The general was roused. At a glance he saw that the hour had come, and gave the order for the troops to get under arms. Burr assisted in communicating the order to the divisions, and soon had his storming-party in readiness to move. By personal inspection, by the touch of his own hand, he assured himself that the men under his immediate direction were equipped as he had determined they should be on the decisive night. By two o'clock the men had been carefully inspected, and were ready to march to the points whence they were to assault the town. About nine hundred men answered to their names that morning They were divided into four parties, only two

of which were designed to fight; the others were to distract the garrison by feints at places remote from the scene of serious attack. One of the figting-parties was led by Arnold; the other, in spite of the remonstrances of Burr and others of the general's family, was commanded by Montgomery, whose towering form appeared at the head of the column. At four o'clock, the divisions had reached their designated posts. At five the signal of attack was given, and the chilled soldiers, impatient to move, began the ascent through the snow-drifts, and in the teeth of the storm.

Captain Burr marched side by side with his general at the head of the division, as it hurried along the St. Lawrence to the defenses under Cape Diamond. These were well known to the vigilant aid-de-camp. First, the attacking party came upon a row of pickets, which the general, with his own hands, assisted to cut away. Pushing on through the snow and darkness, they reached, a few paces beyond, a second row of pickets, behind which was a square, two-story block-house, loop-holed above for musketry, and pierced below for two twelve-pounders, which, charged with grape, commanded the narrow gorge up which an enemy must advance. It was not till the Americans had begun to remove the second row of pickets, that the British guard became aware of the presence of an enemy. Delivering one ineffectual fire, they fled to the block-house, and communicating their terror to the party within, who were mostly sailors and militia, the whole body fled without once discharging the cannon. But their panic, unfortunately, was not perceived by the Americans, and a delay, short but fatal, occurred. Masses of ice, left on the winter subsidence of the river, obstructed the ascent, and several minutes elapsed before a sufficient number of men could clamber over these and form within the second picket to attack the block-house. In smoothing the pathway, the general himself tugged at the great blocks of ice with furious energy. At length, two hundred men were formed in column. The general was at its head, as before. Burr was at his side. Two other aids, an orderly sergeant, and a French guide, completed the group in advance. "Push on, brave boys, Quebec

is ours," cried Montgomery, as the column began to move up the ascent. On they marched to within forty paces of the block-house. At that moment, a sailor who had fled from his post, surprised that the Americans did not advance, ventured back to discover the reason. Through one of the port-holes of the block-house he saw the advancing party, and turned to run away again; but, as he turned, he performed an act which decided the fortunes of the day, and gave Canada back again to Britain. He touched off one of those grape-charged cannon.

Forward fell the majestic form of Montgomery, never to rise again. Down went two of his aids, mortally wounded. The orderly sergeant, too, never saw daylight again. Every man that marched in front of the column, except Captain Burr and the guide, were struck down to death by the discharge of that twelve-pounder. The day was just dawning, and the soldiers were soon aware of the whole extent of the catastrophe. The column halted and wavered. The command fell into incompetent hands. Priceless minutes were lost in those *consultations* by which cowardice loves to hide its trepidation. At that critical time, when all but the staunchest hearts gave way, Burr was as cool, as determined, as eager to go forward, as at the most exultant moment of the advance. He was vehement, almost to the point of mutiny, in urging a renewal of the attack. "When dismay and consternation universally prevailed," testifies Captain Richard Platt, who commanded a New York company, among the most advanced in the column of attack, "Burr animated the troops, and made many efforts to lead them on, and stimulated them to enter the lower town; and might have succeeded, but for the positive order of the commanding officer for the troops to retreat." There was small need of *order* to that effect. The enemy returned to the block-house, and opened fire on the assailants. The retreat soon became a precipitate and disorderly flight.

It was then that our young aid-de-camp made a noble display of courage and fidelity; improving the opportunity which the brave know how to snatch from the teeth of disaster. There lay the body of his general in its snowy shroud.

Down the steep, over the blocks of ice and drifts of snow, and along the river's bank, his comrades were flying in disgraceful panic. From the block-house, the enemy were beginning to issue in pursuit. The faithful aid, a boy in stature, exerting all his strength, lifted the general's superbly-proportioned body upon his shoulders, and ran with it down the gorge, up to his knees in snow, the enemy only forty paces behind him. Burr's gallantry on this occasion, too, had a witness. Samuel Spring, his college friend, the chaplain to the expeditionary force, was near the head of the assaulting column on this eventful morning, and was one of the last to leave the scene of action. It was his friendly eyes that saw "little Burr," in the snowy dimness of the dawn, hurrying away before the enemy, and staggering under his glorious load. The chances of war separated those two friends there and then. From that hour, for fifty years, the reverend chaplain never saw the face of Aaron Burr. But the picture was indelibly imprinted upon his memory, and he loved the lad for it while his heart beat; and he *would* testify his love, after that lapse of time, when it required some manliness in a clergyman even to accost Aaron Burr, and when Spring's own son, more worldly wise, besought the old clergyman not to see the man who had "*lost caste!*" But to conclude the adventure. "Little Burr" could not long sustain the burden. He reeled along with it till the enemy were close behind him; when, to avoid capture, he was compelled to drop the body in the snow again, and hasten after the flying troops.

Burr's behavior on this decisive day won him great distinction, and laid the foundation of his fortune. His praises were warmly repeated among the troops, with whom he had before been a favorite. His extreme youth, his singular coolness and tact, the éclat attached to his position as a gentleman volunteer, his quick intelligence and courteous manners all conspired to win the regard of those rustic soldiers. Fourteen days after the assault, the news of its failure reached the lower provinces of New England and struck dismay to the heart of the most hopeful. But the brilliant deeds of valor which had marked the whole course of the expedition were a consolation

to the struggling patriots, who listened with greedy ears to the wondrous story; and while the headlong courage and indomitable perseverance of Arnold, the chivalric gallantry of Montgomery, the desperate bravery of Morgan, all had their due of praise and reward, the romantic exploits of the boy aid-de-camp who bore his general's body from the enemy's fire were not forgotten. Ogden, soon after the action, went home with dispatches, and told his friends, told Congress, told General Washington, of "little Burr's" bravery; and back to Quebec came a budget of congratulatory letters. It is pleasant to see how glad and proud Burr's young friends were that he had won distinction. His sister, who had passed many weeks of agonizing suspense without any news of him whatever, hearing now, at once, of his safety and his glory, was in ecstacies of pride and delight.

The American forces remained about Quebec till the spring, annoying the garrison as best they could, and not without hope of starving it into a surrender. Arnold, who had been wounded in the assault, was again the officer in command, and appointed Burr to the post of brigade-major. Burr, however, was not an admirer of the turbulent and daring apothecary. Arnold had an absurd idea of taunting and defying the enemy by parading the troops in sight of the fortress, and by sending letters demanding its surrender, practices most repugnant to the practical mind of Burr. A letter of this description Arnold desired Major Burr to convey to the British commander. He demanded to know its contents, and upon Arnold's objecting, offered to resign his post, but refused, point-blank, to carry a letter of which he knew not the purport. Arnold then showed him the letter, which demanded a surrender of the fortress, and was couched in what Burr deemed most arrogant and insulting language. He still declined to be the bearer of such a missive, and predicted that whoever should deliver it would meet only with contempt and derision. Arnold sent it by another officer, who was treated precisely as Burr had anticipated.

In the spring, the Americans had to retreat before the new army under Burgoyne. They remained a short time at Mont-

real, where Burr's dislike to Arnold increased to such a degree that he determined to leave him and seek more active service nearer home. Even on the march through the wilderness, he thought Arnold had not shared the privations of the troops as he ought; and now, when the resources of a town were at his command, Burr was thoroughly disgusted with the general's all-exacting meanness. "Arnold," Burr used to say, "is a perfect madman in the excitements of battle, and is ready for any deeds of valor; but he has not a particle of moral courage. He is utterly unprincipled, and has no love of country or self-respect to guide him. He is not to be trusted anywhere but under the eye of a superior."

On reaching the river Sorel, Major Burr informed Arnold of his determination to leave. Arnold, not in the best humor, objected. With the utmost suavity of manner, Burr said,

"Sir, I have a boat in readiness; I have employed four discharged soldiers to row me, and I start from such a point (naming it) at six o'clock to-morrow morning."

Whereupon Arnold angrily forbade his departure, and Burr, in the blandest tone, reiterated his determination. In the morning, as the young soldier was about to step into his boat, he saw Arnold approaching.

"Why, Major Burr, you are not going?" said he.

"I am, sir," was the reply.

"But," said Arnold, "you know it is against my orders."

"I know," rejoined Burr, "that you have the *power* to stop me, but nothing short of force shall do it."

Upon this, Arnold changed his tone, and tried to persuade his efficient brigade-major to remain. In a few minutes, Burr stepped into his boat, wished the general good-by and good fortune, and was rowed away without hinderance. As a *volunteer*, who had remained with the corps as long as there was danger to be faced or fatigue to be undergone, Burr, disciplinarian as he was, felt that he had a right to leave. Arnold's unwillingness to let him go arose from the fact that a competent brigade-major relieves a general from all the details of command; as much so as a good mate the captain of a ship. To a man of Arnold's self-indulgent habits, an officer like

Burr, of sleepless vigilance, and of activity that nothing could tire, was a most important acquisition.

On the Sorel, an incident occurred which frightened Burr's oarsmen, and still more a young trader with whom he shared the boat. As the boat rounded a point, there suddenly came into view a large brick house, with loopholes for the discharge of musketry, and an Indian warrior, in full costume, standing at the door. The crew were for instant retreat, but Burr seeing that they were already far within rifle-shot, ordered them to go on. At this, the passenger, in a rage of terror, attempted to prevent the soldiers from rowing; but Burr, drawing a pistol, declared he would shoot him if he interfered, and directed the men to row straight toward the portentous edifice.

"I will go up to the house," he added, "and we shall soon learn who they are."

Before the boat reached the land, the Indians came swarming from the house, and presented an appearance as alarming as picturesque. Burr sprang ashore, walked toward them, and soon had the pleasure of learning that they were peacefully disposed. In a few minutes he caused to be brought on shore a keg of whisky, which put the Indians into the highest good humor, and they parted excellent friends.

On reaching Albany, Burr learned that his services in Canada had greatly pleased the commander-in-chief. Upon Ogden's visit to Philadelphia with dispatches, he had been informed by Mr. Reed that there was a vacancy on the staff of General Washington, to which he should be glad to recommend him. Ogden replied, that he preferred more active service, and proceeded to use all his eloquence and interest in procuring the staff appointment for his friend Burr. To General Washington himself he extolled Burr's gallantry and talent with all the warmth of the most devoted friendship, and he soon had the delight of conveying to his friend a message from the general.

"General Washington," he wrote, "desires me to inform you that he will provide for you, and that he expects you will come to him immediately, and stay in his family. You will

now want your horse," added Ogden; "I have sold him, and spent the money," etc.

The letter, of which this is a part, passed Burr on his way to New York; it was from other friends that he first heard of General Washington's invitation. So long a period had elapsed since he had heard from Ogden, that he began to think that gentleman must have forgotten, amid the multitude of his new friends, the companion, the brother, of his youth. And while Ogden was exulting at the success of his friendly endeavors, Burr was lamenting his apparent faithlessness and neglect. He wrote him a letter, upbraiding him in terms amusing for their young-manish severity and loftiness. He dealt *Romanly* with him.

"There is in *man*," said Burr, "a certain love of novelty; a fondness of variety (useful within proper limits), which influences more or less in almost every act of life. New views, new laws, new *friends*, have each their charm. Truly great must be the soul, and firm almost beyond the weakness of humanity, that can withstand the smiles of fortune. Success, promotion, the caresses of the great, and the flatteries of the low, are sometimes fatal to the noblest minds. The volatile become an easy prey. The fickle heart, tiptoe with joy, as from an eminence, views with contempt its former joys, connections, and pursuits. A new taste contracted, seeks companions suited to itself. But pleasures easiest tasted, though perhaps at first of higher glee, are soonest past, and, the more they are relied upon, leave the severer sting behind. One cloudy day despoils the glow-worm of all its glitter. Should fortune ever frown upon you, Matt.; should those you now call friends forsake you; should the clouds gather force on every side, and threaten to burst upon you, think then upon the man who never betrayed you; rely on the sincerity you never found to fail; and if my heart, my life, and my fortune can assist you, it is yours."

Upon the receipt of Ogden's letter, Burr saw his error, and all was well again between the two friends. Ogden, indeed, loved Aaron Burr with an unusual affection. In the very letter which told Burr of General Washington's favor,

Ogden mentioned that he had recently gone out of his way in the hope of meeting him, and declared that his failure to do so was the greatest disappointment he had ever experienced.

In May, 1776, Major Burr reported himself in New York to General Washington, who at once invited him to reside in his family until a suitable appointment could be procured for him. The commander-in-chief was residing at Richmond Hill, then about two miles from the city, on the banks of the Hudson, in a mansion which was afterward Burr's own country seat. It was a delightful abode, say the old chroniclers; the grounds extending down to the river, and the neighborhood adorned with groves, gardens, ponds, and villas.*

Burr, with alacrity, accepted General Washington's invitation, and went immediately to reside at head-quarters. For about six weeks, he sat at the general's table, occasionally rode out with him, and performed some of the duties of aid-de-camp. Long before the expiration of even that short period, he became so disgusted with his situation, that in one of his letters to Governor Hancock, his own and his father's friend, he talked seriously of retiring from the service. Hancock dissuaded him, and offered to procure him the appointment of aid to General Putnam, then quartered in the city. Burr consented, and in July took up his abode with Putnam at the corner of Broadway and the Battery, where also Mrs. Putnam lived and kept her daughters busy spinning flax to help supply the soldiers with shirts. In this homely, noble scene, Burr was perfectly contented; and as aid to the general employed in fortifying the city, he found the active employment he had desired. "My good old general," he was wont to style the soft-hearted, tough, indomitable wolf-killer.

Of the minor events of Burr's life, none contributed more

* The site of the old mansion is now the corner of Charlton and Varick streets. Twenty years ago, a part of the house was still standing, and served as a low drinking shop. The vicinity, so enchanting in Burr's day, presents at this time a dreary scene of shabby ungentility, as passengers by the Sixth Avenue cars have an opportunity of observing.

to the odium which finally gathered round his name than this abrupt departure from the family of General Washington. It often happens, in the case of men respecting whom the public verdict is, upon the whole, not unjust, that many of the *specifications* in the charge against them are unfounded. Good men, too, are praised for more virtues than they possess. Now, nothing could have been more natural, or more proper, than Burr's discontent as a member of Washington's family. The nature of the duties that devolved upon the general's aides during the whole of the war, is well known. Washington, with the affairs of a continent upon his shoulders, was burdened with a prodigious correspondence. The enemy was the *least* of his perplexities. In managing and advising Congress, in getting the army organized, in stirring up the zeal of the governors and legislatures of the States, in reconciling the perpetual disputes about rank, his time and mind were chiefly employed. His aides, no less than his secretary, were often confined to the desk more hours a day than bank clerks. Burr was the most active of human beings. He had just come from an expedition which had tasked all his powers, and given him the taste of glory. He was in the midst of a scene calculated to arouse the most sluggish. Staten Island was dotted all over with the tents of the enemy, and the bay was whitened with the sails of the most imposing fleet these shores had ever beheld. The patriot force was straining every nerve to prepare the city for the expected landing of the enemy. Ogden, now lieutenant-colonel, with his regiment of Jerseymen, was in active service, and told Burr he was going to do honor to their native State. The townspeople were in dreadful alarm. When the British saluted an arriving ship, or when a sloop ran past General Putnam's batteries, cannonading as she went, women and children, as Washington himself records, ran shrieking into the streets, in terror of a bombardment. Everywhere were seen the sights, and heard the sounds, that appal the citizen and animate the soldier. It was in such circumstances, that Burr, the electric Burr, the born soldier, the most irrepressible of mortals, found himself sinking into the condition of a *clerk!* The situation was intolerable to him; as it was, after-

ward, to Hamilton,* who liked the post of General Washington's aid little better than Burr did.

Hamilton, however, learned, as he grew older, to value correctly the character of the commander-in-chief, and the immeasurable services which his caution and perseverance had rendered to his country and to man. Burr never did. The prejudices against the general, imbibed during his short residence with him at Richmond Hill, were strengthened by subsequent events into a settled dislike, which he carried with him through life. He thought George Washington was a bad general, and an honest, weak man. He said he knew nothing

* Hamilton, in a letter to General Schuyler, dated February 18th, 1781, gives the following account of his break with General Washington: "Two days ago, the general and I passed each other on the stairs; he told me he wanted to speak with me; I answered that I would wait upon him immediatel. I went below and delivered Mr. Tilghman a letter to be sent to the commissary, containing an order of a pressing and interesting nature. Returning to the general, I was stopped on the way by the Marquis de la Fayette, and we conversed together, about a minute, on a matter of business. He can testify how impatient I was to get back, and that I left him in a manner which, but for our intimacy, would have been more than abrupt. Instead of finding the general, as is usual, in his room, I met him at the head of the stairs, where, accosting me in an angry voice, 'Colonel Hamilton,' said he, 'you have kept me waiting at the head of the stairs these ten minutes; I must tell you, sir, you treat me with disrespect.' I replied, without petulancy, but with decision, 'I am not conscious of it, sir, but since you have thought it necessary to tell me so, we part.' 'Very well, sir,' said he, 'if it be your choice,' or something to that effect, and we separated. I sincerely believe my absence, which gave so much umbrage, did not last two minutes. In less than an hour after, Mr. Tilghman came to me, in the general's name, assuring me of his confidence in my ability, integrity, usefulness, etc., and of his desire, in a candid conversation, to heal a difference which could not have happened but in a moment of passion. I requested Mr. Tilghman to tell him, first, that I had taken my resolution in a manner not to be revoked," etc., etc.

Hamilton proceeds to say that he had long been discontented with the situation of aid, and had previously determined that if he *ever did* have a difference with General Washington, it should be final. He then adds: "The general is a very honest man; his competitors have slender abilities and less integrity. His popularity has often been essential to the safety of America, and is still of great importance to it. These considerations have influenced my past conduct respecting him, and will influence my future: I think it necessary he should be supported."

of scientific warfare, and could therefore give no instruction of any value to a young soldier burning to excel in his profession. He thought the general was as fond of adulation as he was known to be sensitive to censure, and that no officer could stand well with him who did not play the part of his worshiper. He could not bear near his person, said Burr, a man of an independent habit of mind. Washington's want of book-culture, too, would naturally surprise a youth who was born and reared amid books, and who was, to the last, an eager reader. In a word, Burr saw in this wise, illustrious man, only the thrifty planter, and the country gentleman; a good soldier enough in Indian warfare, but quite at fault in the presence of a civilized enemy.

The general, on his part, seems to have conceived an ill impression of Burr, but not the serious distrust of after years, when Burr was his political opponent. Burr always asserted that it was *not* an amour, nor any thing of that nature, but his independent manner of enforcing opinions, to which time added the sting of proved correctness, that made General Washington his enemy. Burr, for example, was one of a considerable number of officers who thought that New York could not be held, and that to burn and abandon it was the best way to frustrate the British commander. No doubt the old young-man expressed this opinion with a confidence to which his age and his dimensions gave him no apparent title. But, at twenty, "little Burr" had been a man for some years; at least in confidence in his own abilities.

In one word, there was an antipathy between the two men; each lacking qualities which the other highly prized; each possessing virtues which by the other were not admired.

CHAPTER VI.

AID-DE-CAMP TO GENERAL PUTNAM.

THE RETREAT FROM LONG ISLAND — BURR SAVES A BRIGADE — HIS AFFAIR WITH MISS MONCRIEFFE — HER NARRATIVE.

IT was the fortune of Major Burr, while serving as aid to General Putnam, to save a frightened brigade, and to win a virgin heart.

During the disastrous days upon Long Island which preceded the famous retreat of the American army, General Putnam was in command, and his aid-de-camp was in the thick of events. To reach the scene of action, and to begin an accurate survey of it, were simultaneous occurrences with that intelligent young soldier. He rode about the American camp, and visited every post and out-post. He informed himself of the positions and strength of the enemy. He discovered that the American troops had as yet no idea of standing against the British in open fight; that Bunker Hill was still their ideal of a battle, and breast-works their only reliance. His report to the general was unfavorable in the extreme, and he was more decided than ever in the opinion that General Washington's true plan was, by retreating from the coast, to draw the British army away from their ships, which were an immense support to them, both morally and otherwise. He was utterly opposed to a general action, for the reason that a large proportion of the new troops, he was certain, would not stand more than one volley. When the American army crossed the East river, in the presence of the enemy, he was engaged during the whole night on the Brooklyn side, where his coolness and activity made a lasting impression upon the mind of General McDougal, who superintended the embarkation. In later campaigns, Burr served under that general, who showed

how he valued Burr's soldierly qualities by the use he made of them.

But it was on that eventful Sunday, September the 15th, 1776, when the British landed on Manhattan island, and the American army fled before them to Harlem, that Major Burr most distinguished himself. He was in the rear of the retreating troops; as was also Captain Alexander Hamilton, with his company of New York artillery. Hamilton lost all his baggage and one gun that afternoon, but conducted his men gallantly and safely away. As Major Burr, with two horsemen, was riding toward Richmond Hill, on his way to Harlem, he came upon a small sod-fort, called Bunker's Hill, nearly on the line of what is now Grand-street. To his astonishment he found that a great part of an American brigade, left in the city by one of the numberless mistakes inevitable on such a day, had taken refuge in this structure.

The British, it must be remembered, landed on the East river side of the island, nearly four miles above the Battery, with the intention to cut off the retreat of the Americans, and General Knox, who commanded this brigade, supposed that the enemy were already masters of the island, and that escape by flight was impossible. Major Burr rode up to the fort and asked who commanded there. General Knox presenting himself, Burr inquired what he was doing *there*, and why he did not retreat. The general replied that the enemy were already across the island, and that he meant to defend the fort. Burr ridiculed the idea of defending a place which was not bomb-proof, and which contained neither water nor provisions. With one howitzer, he exclaimed, the enemy will knock it to pieces in four hours. He maintained that there was no chance but retreat, and urged the general to lead out his men. Knox declared it would be madness to attempt it, and refused to stir. While this debate was waxing warm, the officers of the brigade gathered round, eager to hear what was said. To them Burr addressed himself with the vehemence demanded by the occasion. He told them that if they remained where they were they would all be prisoners before night, or hung like dogs. He said it was better for half the corps to fall

fighting its way through the enemy's lines, than for all to be taken and rot in a dungeon. He added that he knew the roads of the island perfectly, and would lead them safely to the main body of the army, if they would place themselves under his direction. The men agreed to follow him, and they marched out, Burr riding in advance, on the side where an attack was to be feared, and returning at intervals to reassure the terrified troops. When they had gone two miles on their way, firing was suddenly heard at the right. Shouting to his men to follow him, Burr galloped directly to the spot whence the firing had issued, and soon discovered that it was a small advance-guard of the enemy, consisting of a single company, who, on seeing the Americans, fired and fled. Burr and his two horsemen rode furiously after them, and killed several of the fugitives. Galloping back, he found the troops had taken a wrong road, and were in sore trepidation. He guided them now through a wood, riding from front to rear, and from rear to front, encouraging them by his words, and still more by his cool, intrepid demeanor. With the loss of a few stragglers, for the march was of the swiftest, he led the brigade to the main body. He was ever after regarded by those troops as their deliverer from British prison-ships.

This brilliant feat of the young aid-de-camp became the talk of the army. Soon after, on the surrender of Fort Washington, another brigade was, by a similar accident, left behind; and of 2500 men that fell into the hands of the enemy, not 500 survived the treatment they received as prisoners. Applauded by his comrades, Burr was not mentioned in the dispatches of the commander-in-chief; which, then and always, he regarded as an intentional slight.

For a short period after the retreat, he was comparatively at leisure. Among his letters, there is one written at this time from Kingsbridge to Mrs. Timothy Edwards, the aunt who had been to him all of a mother that any but a mother can be to a child. She had written to him in great alarm, on hearing of the abandonment of New York. His reply, so modest, so tenderly respectful, so sensible, would alone make it difficult to believe that at this time Aaron Burr was a bad

man, whatever he may afterward have become. He tells his aunt it had always been a thing conceded, that the sea-ports of America were at the discretion of the tyrant of Great Britain; and that it was a great gain for the American army to be in a position where, to attack them, the British must leave the immediate support of their ships. Besides, the loss of the city was rousing the country from lethargy; more effectual measures than ever were in contemplation to increase the army; and a committee of Congress was then in camp to concert those measures with the commander-in-chief. "I do not intend by this, my dear aunt," he continues, "to deceive you into an opinion that every thing is already entirely secure;" but "I hope, madam, you will continue, with your usual philosophy and resolution, prepared for the uncertain events of war, not anticipating improbable calamities." And as to the horrible stories in circulation about the barbarities of the Hessians, "most of them are incredible and false; they are fonder of plunder than blood, and are more the engines than the authors of cruelty." And so he proceeds to calm the apprehensions of the good lady, writing her a letter which she would be proud to hand round the village, and which would encourage and stimulate the friends of the cause. His own exploits during the late battles and retreats he does not allude to.

At Kingsbridge, about the date of this letter, Burr was engaged in an adventure little in harmony with the warlike scenes around him.

The breaking out of the revolutionary war found a number of British officers domesticated among the colonists, and connected with them by marriage. In New York and the other garrisoned towns, officers of the army led society, as military men still do in every garrisoned town in the world. When hostilities began, and every man was ordered to his post, some of these officers left their families residing among the people; and it happened, in a few instances, that the events of war carried a father far away from his wife and children, never to rejoin them. The future Scott of America will know how to make all this very familiar to the American people

by the romantic and pathetic fictions which it will suggest to him.

Margaret Moncrieffe, a girl of fourteen, but a woman in development and appetite, witty, vivacious, piquant and beautiful, had been left at Elizabethtown, in New Jersey, by her father, Major Moncrieffe, who was then with his regiment on Staten Island, and of course cut off from communication with his daughter. Destitute of resources, and anxious to rejoin her father, she wrote to General Putnam for his advice and assistance. General Putnam received her letter in New York about the time that Major Burr joined him, and his reply was prepared for his signature by the hand of his new aid-de-camp. The good old general declared in this letter that he was her father's enemy, indeed, as an officer, but as a man, his friend, and ready to do any good office for him or his. He invited her to come and reside in his family until arrangements could be made for sending her to Staten Island. She consented, an officer was sent to conduct her to the city, and she was at once established in General Putnam's house. There she met, and became intimate with Major Burr.

What followed from their intimacy has been stated variously by those who have written of it. Mr. Davis more than insinuates, nay, more than asserts, that Miss Moncrieffe was seduced by Burr, and that to him is to be attributed her subsequent career of sorrow and shame. In support of this accusation, he quotes from her autobiography, published after she had been the mistress of half a dozen of the notables of London, certain passages which, taken by themselves, do certainly corroborate the charge. Great indeed was my astonishment on recurring to the work itself (Memoirs of Mrs. Coghlan) to find that her narrative, read in connection, not only affords no support to Mr. Davis's insinuations, but explicitly, and twice, contradicts them. As a reply to Mr. Davis's garbled extracts, here follows the entire passage relating to her connection with the American army. It is known and conceded that the young officer whom she extols in such passionate language, and whom she miscalls 'colonel,' was Major Burr. Thus writes Mrs. Coghlan, *née* Moncrieffe:

"When I arrived in Broadway (a street so called), where General Putnam resided, I was received with great tenderness, both by Mrs. Putnam and her daughters, and on the following day I was introduced by them to General and Mrs. Washington, who likewise made it their study to show me every mark of regard; but I seldom was allowed to be alone, although sometimes, indeed, I found an opportunity to escape to the gallery on the top of the house, where my chief delight was to view, with a telescope, our fleet and army on Staten Island. My amusements were few; the good Mrs. Putnam employed me and her daughters constantly to spin flax for shirts for the American soldiers; indolence, in America, being totally discouraged; and I likewise worked for General Putnam, who, though not an accomplished *muscadin*, like our dilletantis of St. James's-street, was certainly one of the best characters in the world; his heart being composed of those noble materials which equally command respect and admiration.

"One day, after dinner, the *Congress* was the toast; General Washington viewed me very attentively, and sarcastically said, 'Miss Moncrieffe, you don't drink your wine.' Embarrassed by this reproof, I knew not how to act; at last, as if by a secret impulse, I addressed myself to the 'American Commander,' and taking the wine, I said, 'General Howe is the toast.' Vexed at my temerity, the whole company, especially General Washington, censured me; when my good friend, General Putnam, as usual, apologized, and assured them I did not mean to offend. 'Besides,' replied he, 'every thing said or done by such a child ought rather to amuse than affront you.' General Washington, piqued at this observation, then said, 'Well, miss, I will overlook your indiscretion, on condition that you drink my health, or General Putnam's, the first time you dine at Sir William Howe's table, on the other side of the water.'

"These words conveyed to me a flattering hope that I should once more see my father, and I promised General Washington to do any thing which he desired, provided he would permit me to return to him.

"Not long after this circumstance, a flag of truce arrived from Staten Island, with letters from Major Moncrieffe, demanding me, for they now considered me as a prisoner. General Washington would not acquiesce in this demand, saying 'that I should remain a hostage for my father's good behavior.' I must here observe, that when General Washington refused to deliver me up, the noble-minded Putnam, as if it were by instinct, laid his hand on his sword, and, with a violent oath, swore 'that my father's request *should* be granted.' The commander-in-chief, whose influence governed the Congress, soon prevailed on them to consider me as a person whose situation required their strict attention; and, that I might not escape, they ordered me to Kingsbridge, where, in justice, I must say, that I was treated with the utmost tenderness. General Mifflin there commanded. His lady was a most accomplished, beautiful woman, a Quaker. And here my heart received its first impression—an impression that, amid the subsequent shocks which it has received, has never been effaced, and which rendered me very unfit to admit the embraces of an unfeeling, brutish husband.

"O, may these pages one day meet the eye of him who subdued my virgin heart, whom the immutable, unerring laws of nature had pointed out for my husband, but whose sacred decree the barbarous customs of society fatally violated. To him I plighted my virgin vow, and I shall never cease to lament that obedience to a father left it incomplete. When I reflect on my past sufferings, now that, alas! my present sorrows press heavily upon me, I can not refrain from expatiating a little on the inevitable horrors which ever attend the frustration of natural affections: I myself, who, unpitied by the world, have endured every calamity that human nature knows, am a melancholy example of this truth; for if I know my own heart, it is far better calculated for the purer joys of domestic life, than for the hurricane of extravagance and dissipation in which I have been wrecked.

"Why is the will of nature so often perverted? Why is social happiness for ever sacrificed at the altar of prejudice? Avarice has usurped the throne of reason, and the affections

of the heart are not consulted. We can not command our desires, and when the object of our being is unattained, misery must be necessarily our doom. Let this truth, therefore, be for ever remembered: when once an affection has rooted itself in a tender, constant heart, no time, no circumstance can eradicate it. Unfortunate, then, are they who are joined, if their hearts are not matched!

"With this conqueror of my soul, how happy should I now have been! What storms and tempests should I have avoided (at least I am pleased to think so) if I had been allowed to follow the bent of my inclinations! and happier, O, ten thousand times happier should I have been with him, in the wildest desert of our native country, the woods affording us our only shelter, and their fruits our only repast, than under the canopy of costly state, with all the refinements and embellishments of courts, with the royal warrior who would fain have proved himself the conqueror of France.

"My conqueror was engaged in another cause, he was ambitious to obtain other laurels: he fought to liberate, not to enslave nations. He was a colonel in the American army, and high in the estimation of his country: his victories were never accompanied with one gloomy, relenting thought; they shone as bright as the cause which achieved them! I had communicated by letter to General Putnam the proposals of this gentleman, with my determination to accept them, and I was embarrassed by the answer which the general returned; he entreated me to remember that the person in question, from his political principles, was extremely obnoxious to my father, and concluded by observing, 'that I surely must not unite myself with a man who would not hesitate to drench his sword in the blood of my nearest relation, should he be opposed to him in battle.' Saying this, he lamented the necessity of giving advice contrary to his own sentiments, since in every other respect he considered the match as unexceptionable. Nevertheless, General Putnam, after this discovery, appeared, in all his visits to Kingsbridge, extremely reserved; his eyes were constantly fixed on me; nor did he ever cease to make me the object of his concern to Congress; and, after

various applications, he succeeded in obtaining leave for my departure; when, in order that I should go to Staten Island with the respect due to my sex and family, the barge belonging to the Continental Congress was ordered, with twelve oars, and a general officer, together with his suite, was dispatched to see me safe across the bay of New York. The day was so very tempestuous, that I was half drowned with the waves dashing against me. When we came within hail of the *Eagle* man-of-war, which was Lord Howe's ship, a flag of truce was sent to meet us: the officer dispatched on this occasion was Lieutenant Brown. General Knox told him that he had orders to see me safe to head-quarters. Lieutenant Brown replied, 'It was impossible, as no person from the enemy could approach nearer the English fleet;' but added, 'that if I would place myself under his protection, he certainly would attend me thither.' I then entered the barge, and bidding an eternal farewell to my dear American friends, turned MY BACK ON LIBERTY.

"We first rowed alongside the *Eagle*, and Mr. Brown afterward conveyed me to head-quarters. When my name was announced, the British commander-in-chief sent Colonel Sheriff (lately made a general, and who, during my father's life-time, was one of his most particular friends; although, alas! the endearing sentiment of friendship now seems extinct in his breast, as far as the unhappy daughter is concerned) with an invitation from Sir William Howe to dinner, which was necessarily accepted. When introduced, I can not describe the emotion I felt; so sudden the transition in a few hours, that I was ready to sink into earth! Judge the distress of a girl not fourteen, obliged to encounter the curious, inquisitive eyes of at least forty or fifty people who were at dinner with the general. Fatigued with their fastidious compliments, I could only hear the buzz among them, saying, 'She is a sweet girl, she is divinely handsome;' although it was some relief to be placed at table next to the wife of Major Montresor, who had known me from my infancy. Owing to this circumstance, I recovered a degree of confidence; but being unfortunately asked, agreeably to military etiquette, for a toast, I gave

'General Putnam.' Colonel Sheriff said, in a low voice, 'You must not give him here;' when Sir William Howe complaisantly replied, 'O! by all means; if he be the lady's sweetheart, I can have no objection to drink his health.' This involved me in a new dilemma; I wished myself a thousand miles distant, and, to divert the attention of the company, I gave to the general a letter that I had been commissioned to deliver from General Putnam, of which the following is a copy. (And here I consider myself bound to apologize for the bad spelling of my most excellent republican friend. The bad orthography was amply compensated by the magnanimity of the man who wrote it):

"'*Ginrale* Putnam's compliments to Major Moncrieffe, has made him a present of a fine daughter, if he don't *lick* her he must send her back again, and he will previde her with a good *twig* husband.'

"The substitution of *twig* for *whig* husband, served as a fund of entertainment to the whole company."

She proceeds to record the history of her marriage with Mr. Coghlan, who, she says, drove her into the arms of a paramour by the brutality of his conduct. She asserts that she had led a strictly virtuous life until, after being forced into a marriage with a man she loathed, she was subjected by him to harsh and cruel treatment. The statements of a woman notorious for her vices can not, of course, be regarded as evidence; yet it seemed just to the memory of Burr for the reader to be informed that the story of her seduction by him has no corroboration in her own narrative. The man has enough to answer for without having the ruin of this girl of fourteen laid to his charge. Her story, it must be admitted, is not very probable. Burr was, to a considerable extent, his general's general; and if he had really loved Miss Moncrieffe, and she him, and each had desired marriage, I think that General Putnam could have been easily dissuaded from making any serious opposition to it.

Perhaps, if the young lady had known who it was that caused her removal from the city, she might not have been so easily captivated. According to a story told by the late

Colonel W. L. Stone (author of the Life of Brant), it was no other than Burr himself. Before her arrival at General Putnam's, it appears that Burr, though he was delighted with her wit and vivacity, conceived the idea that she might be a British spy; and as he was looking over her shoulder one day, while she was painting a bouquet, the suspicion darted into his mind that she was using the "language of flowers" for the purpose of conveying intelligence to the enemy. He communicated his suspicion to General Washington, who thought it only prudent to remove her a few miles further inland, to the quarters of General Mifflin; where, after the evacuation of the city, Burr met her again, and, as she says, won her virgin affections. Colonel Stone was very intimate with Burr in his latter years, and had long conversations with him about revolutionary times. He may have derived this pretty tale from Burr himself.

CHAPTER VII.

HE COMMANDS A REGIMENT.

Appointed a Lieutenant-Colonel — Commands a Regiment — Captures a British Picket — Forms an Acquaintance with Mrs. Theodosia Prevost — Commands a Brigade at the Battle of Monmouth — Anecdote.

Major Burr continued to serve as General Putnam's aid for ten months after the retreat from New York, and bore his part in the toils and dangers of that dismal period. In the spring of 1777 a new army was to be raised, but he had no hopes of a regimental appointment in it. In March, he wrote to his friend Ogden that he had not the least expectation of promotion either in the line or on the staff, but as he was "very happy in the esteem and entire confidence of his good old general," he should be piqued at no neglect, unless particularly pointed, or where silence would be want of spirit. It was true, he said, his equals and even inferiors in rank had left him; and assurances from those in power he had had, unasked, in abundance; but of those he should never remind them. We were not to be the judges of our own merit, and he was content to contribute his mite in any station. From this language we may infer that he thought himself an ill-used aid-de-camp.

In July, 1777, while at Peekskill with General Putnam, he was notified by General Washington of his promotion to the rank of lieutenant-colonel. He was the youngest man who held that rank in the revolutionary army, or who has ever held it in an army of the United States; yet he thought the promotion unjustly tardy. In his letter of acknowledgment to the commander-in-chief, he said he was truly sensible of the honor done him, and should be studious to comport himself in

his new rank so as to secure his general's esteem; yet he was constrained to observe that the late date of his appointment subjected him to the command of some officers who were his juniors last campaign; and he should like, with submission, to know whether it was misconduct in him, or extraordinary merit in them, which had given them the preference. He wanted, he continued, to avoid equally the character of turbulent or passive, but as a decent regard to rank was proper and necessary, he hoped the concern he felt was excusable in one who regarded his honor next to the welfare of his country. The general's reply to this letter has not been preserved.

With the rank of lieutenant-colonel, Burr soon found himself the sole commander of his regiment, his colonel not being a fighting man.

To the strength of the patriot cause, every interest of the country had to contribute its quota; rich men, money; influential men, weight and respectability; efficient men, practical help. Many were, therefore, appointed to high posts in the army because they were persons of importance in civil life; they gave their *names* to the cause. Among the reasons which made Washington the most complete exemplification of "*the right man for the right place*," that history exhibits, one was that he was a great Virginia gentleman, who had vast plantations, hundreds of slaves, a fine mansion, and rode about in a chariot and six. "One of the finest fortunes in America," John Adams exultingly exclaims, in mentioning his acceptance of the command. And his exultation was just; for such things have not merely a legitimate influence in human affairs, but the fact of such a fortune being freely *risked* in the cause, showed the faith the owner had in its justice, importance, and chance of success.

Colonel Malcolm, to whose regiment Burr was appointed, had been a leading merchant of New York, and was a man of wealth and influential connections. At the time of Burr's appointment, the regiment, such as it was, lay on the Ramapo, in Orange county, New Jersey, whither he at once repaired, and found the colonel in command. Each surprised the other. Malcolm was amazed at the youthful appearance of

his second in command, and began to fear that he would be continually getting him and the regiment into trouble. But over the Malcolms of the world nothing was easier than for Burr to gain a complete ascendency; and, accordingly, a very few days sufficed for the lieutenant-colonel to inspire his chief with perfect confidence in his abilities. Burr, on his part, saw that Colonel Malcolm was an amiable gentleman, and no soldier. In a short time, the colonel removed with his family twenty miles from where the regiment lay, leaving Burr master of the situation; saying, as he departed, "You shall have all the honor of disciplining and fighting the regiment, while I will be its father." He was as good as his word. During the whole war he did not once lead the regiment into action, nor personally command it more than four weeks. From the day he joined to the day he ceased to be a soldier, Burr was, to all intents and purposes, the regiment's chief officer.

Enjoying now an independent command, Colonel Burr sprang to his duties with an ardor that soon produced surprising results. The regiment was in a condition that would have been ridiculous if the cause had been less serious, and the enemy more remote. The men, of whom there were about two hundred and sixty, were of good material, but almost wholly unacquainted with their duty; and of the officers an unusual number were young gentlemen of the city, members of wealthy families, effeminate in character, and destitute of the faintest intimation of military knowledge. These were just the circumstances to call into exercise the strong and shining qualities of Colonel Burr. He drew tight the reins of discipline which Malcolm had held with an easy hand. Severe drills and rigorous inspections took the place of formal ones. Discovering at a glance the hopeless inefficiency of many of the officers, one of his first objects was to get rid of the worst of them. After some preliminary correspondence with General Conway, and feeling his way in the regiment, he took the bold step of ordering several of the officers home, on the simple ground of their utter uselessness. If any gentleman, he told them, objected to his dismissal, he, Colonel Burr, held

himself personally responsible for the measure, and was ready to afford any satisfaction that might be demanded.

He had read his men correctly. All of the dismissed submitted to his decree without audible murmur, except one, who wrote an absurdly defiant reply to the autocratic colonel. Burr was as civil as an orange to the offended youth, informing him with elegant brevity, that on a certain day, at a certain hour, he should be at the village nearest the young gentleman's residence, where, at the tavern, he would wait any communication he might be pleased to send. To the minute, Colonel Burr was at the place. No one was there to meet him. After waiting awhile, he walked over to the family residence of the dismissed, where, indeed, he was well known, and had often been a guest. The ladies of the family, of whom a large number were assembled, received him with cordiality and distinction; the young officer, too, was extremely polite, and the party sat down to dinner as though nothing had occurred. The colonel conversed with his usual gayety and spirit until the conclusion of the repast, when he struck terror to the party by blandly requesting the young man, whom the ladies called Neddy, to walk out with him. They had not gone many steps from the house, before the ladies, in a body, came shrieking after them. "O, Colonel Burr, what are you going to do with Neddy?" cried one of them. They protested that he had meant no harm, and that he would never write so any more. They would see to that if Colonel Burr would only forgive him. The colonel, amused at the turn the affair had taken, replied, in his politest manner, that nothing was further from his desire than to harm the young gentleman; he would merely take occasion to advise him that when next he felt inclined to indite a swelling letter to a gentleman, he should submit the document to the perusal of the ladies before sending it. With this admonition the colonel handed Neddy over to the ladies, bowed, and took leave. Burr used to say that this incident gave no incorrect idea of the stuff some of the regimental officers were made of at the beginning of the Revolution.

Two months of incessant exertion on the part of the col-

onel brought the regiment to a tolerable state of discipline, and increased its effective force to over three hundred men. Burr was soon the idol of his troops, for he knew how to command them. Exacting the most prompt and implicit obedience, he commanded only what was right and necessary, and was prompt to notice and applaud good conduct. Not a blow was given in the regiment while he was at the head of it, though, at that time, corporeal punishment was a custom in the continental army. He was a natural commander. Men knew by instinct that he was competent to direct them; they followed eagerly where they saw him lead, and bore gladly what they saw he never shrank from sharing with them. His eye was everywhere. The sick he cared for with the tenderness and constancy of a brother, often assisting them with his own hands, and oftener with his purse. "His attention and care of the men," says a subaltern of the regiment, "were such as I never saw, nor any thing approaching it, in any other officer, though I served under many." Such was his vigilance, that some of his men thought him a kind of necromancer, or magician, who could see one sentinel nod and another prowling about for plunder, when he was fast asleep in his bed. In the course of a campaign or two, Malcolm's regiment was one of the best disciplined in the army.

In September, in the midst of his drilling and recruiting, a rumor ran through the neighborhood that the British, in great force, had marched out of New York, and were laying waste the lower parts of Orange county, and driving off the cattle and horses. The country people were panic-stricken and made instant preparations for flight. The rumor proved true, and positive intelligence soon reached Colonel Burr that the enemy, two thousand strong, were within thirty miles of him. To order out his whole force, to detail a small guard for his camp, and to march toward the enemy with the rest, was the work of the first hour of the afternoon; and before the sun set, he had reached Paramus, sixteen miles distant. On the march he was met by an express from General Putnam, advising him of the movements of the enemy, and recommending him to retreat, with the public stores in his keeping, into the

mountains. Observing that he would never run away from an enemy he had not seen, and that he would be answerable for the public stores and for the troops, he pushed on toward Paramus, with new energy. There he found a body of militia of the county, that had rendezvoused at Paramus on the first alarm, and were making confusion worse confounded by their ill-directed, frantic exertions. Among their other feats, they had pulled down most of the fences of the neighboring farms with a vague idea, dear to the minds of militia, of making breast-works with which to stay the conquering progress of the enemy. On Burr's arrival, he took the command of these disorderly troops; and though, as one of them afterward said, he seemed but a boy, yet as he alone appeared to know what he was about, they obeyed him willingly. His own men he posted in a strong position, and took the usual measures to guard against surprise during the night. The militia, after first directing them to repair the damage they had done, he provided for in a similar manner. Then, selecting seventeen of his best men, he started, soon after dark, and marched with all the rapidity possible, and in perfect silence, toward the scene of the enemy's devastations. He was determined on seeing for himself what there was there to run away from.

About ten o'clock in the evening, when within three miles of Hackensack, he received certain information that the most advanced of the enemy's pickets was one mile distant. His men, who had marched thirty miles since leaving camp, were now extremely fatigued. He led them to a wood near by, and ordered them to lie down and keep perfectly silent until he should return. In a few minutes the whole party were asleep

Colonel Burr now went forward alone to reconnoiter. With the stealthy caution of an Indian, he glided toward the picket, and saw them at length, lying on the ground, guarded by two sentinels. He was near enough to overhear their watchword. He then made a wide detour, and ascertained that this picket was so far in advance of the main body as to be out of hearing. In making these observations, and thoroughly satisfying himself of their correctness, the greater part of the night passed, and before he again reached his own party, it was

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within an hour of daybreak. He now quietly and quickly woke his men, told them in a few decided words that he was going to attack the enemy's picket, ordered them to follow at a certain distance, and forbade any man to speak, on pain of instant death. The little column pushed forward rapidly. So accurately had the colonel noted the locality, and calculated the positions of the sentinels, that he was able to lead his men between those two unsuspecting individuals at the moment when they were farthest apart; and he was almost upon the sleeping picket before a man of it began to stir. At the distance of ten yards, Burr, who was a pace or two in advance, was challenged by a sentinel, whom he instantly shot dead, and then gave the word for the attack. With fixed bayonets his men rushed upon the drowsy foe, who were made prisoners before they were completely awake. One officer, a sergeant, a corporal, and twenty-seven privates fell into their hands on this occasion. Only one of the picket, beside the sentinel, made any resistance, and he was overpowered after he had received two bayonet wounds. He attempted to march away with his comrades, but, after going a short distance, was compelled to lie down, exhausted and fainting from loss of blood.

"Go a little further, my good fellow," said Burr, "and we will get a surgeon for you."

"Ah, sir," gasped the dying veteran, "all the doctors in America can do me no service, for I am a dying man; but it grieves me sore to the heart to think I have served my king upward of twenty years, and at length must die with a charged musket in my hand."

In a few minutes, surrounded by friends and foes equally sympathizing, the old soldier breathed his last. Of the attacking party not a man received a scratch.

Instantly Colonel Burr, with the instinct of a true soldier, set about turning this slight and easy victory to the greatest possible advantage. He dispatched an express from the very scene of his exploit to the main body of his troops at Paramus, ordering them to march toward him immediately, with all the militia of the district. In various directions he dis-

patched messengers to rally the country to his support. The news of the night's adventure, magnified into a splendid victory over the red coats, flew like the wind, and displaced the panic of the day before by its natural consequence, an all-defying confidence. At that time the patriots stood in such awe of the British regulars that the actual killing of a few, and the parade of a few more as prisoners, were events of a most inspiring nature, calculated to call forth every musket of the neighborhood in which they occurred. Before night, Colonel Burr found himself at the head of an imposing force, with which he continued to make such terrible demonstrations, that the enemy retreated with precipitation, leaving behind them the cattle they had collected. All night Colonel Burr was again on the alert, arranging his miscellaneous forces, and preparing to march on the morrow in pursuit. But in the morning, came peremptory orders for his regiment to join the main body of the army in Pennsylvania, where Washington was fighting hand to hand with the British for the possession of Philadelphia, with large odds against him. For forty-eight hours he had not once closed his eyes, nor scarcely sat down; yet nothing but the arrival of these orders could have held him back from an impetuous march after the flying enemy. For fifty years the events of these exciting days and nights were narrated in the country; where, to the last, Colonel Burr had devoted friends. In the army the story of his taking off the picket so neatly gave him new popularity.

In all his busy career, Colonel Burr could scarcely ever have been more absorbed in his duties than while thus drilling and fighting his regiment in Orange county, during the first weeks of his exercising independent command. Yet it was there and then that he formed an acquaintance with a lady who, if we may believe a lover's language, first made him respect the intellect of woman, and to whom he owed the happiest hours, the happiest years, of his existence.

At Paramus, sixteen miles from where his regiment lay, there lived, in modest elegance, a family of the name of Prevost, a branch of a family distinguished in the society and in the annals of England. Colonel Prevost was with his regi-

ment in the West Indies, and at Paramus lived his wife, Theodosia Prevost, her sister Miss De Visme, and their mother, Mrs. De Visme, and the two little sons of Colonel and Mrs. Prevost. The ladies were accomplished and intelligent; for a long time their house had been the center of the most elegant society of the vicinity, and after the Revolution had begun, officers of rank in the American army still visited them. By the strict law of the state they would have been compelled to withdraw to the British army, and some of the severer Whigs wished the law to be enforced in their case, as it had been in others. But these ladies, besides being beloved in the neighborhood, guarded their conduct with so much tact that no very serious opposition was made to their residence within the American lines. The sudden death of Colonel Prevost in the West Indies gave them at length the right to embrace either party in the great dispute. When Colonel Burr took the command in that part of the country, the Prevosts held their old position, and their house was a favorite resort of the American officers. It is not unlikely that his acquaintance with the family began on that night of terror when the British threatened to lay waste the country, and the American militia attacked the farm fences. If so, the young soldier must have presented himself to the ladies in the character that ladies love, that of a hero and protector; a protector from the ravages of troops who were there for the express purpose of plundering and destroying. Be that as it may, it is certain that about this time Mrs. Prevost and Colonel Burr conceived for each ether a regard which rapidly warmed into an ardent passion.

But there was no time for dalliance now; he at once began his march across New Jersey, using all his usual vigilance to avoid the enemy, who were known to be in motion, but for what object was uncertain. In November, 1777, he joined the main army, twenty miles above Philadelphia, and after holding a position in advance for some weeks, went into winter quarters, with the rest of the troops, at Valley Forge.

There, as elsewhere, his relations with the commander-in-chief were unfortunate. He planned an expedition against the

British posts on Staten Island, the localities and inhabitants of which had been familiar to him from childhood. He proposed the scheme to General Washington, and asked for two hundred men of his own regiment as a nucleus, relying on his ability to raise the country in case he should appear there with a respectable body of troops. General Washington rejected the proposal; and when, afterward, he acted upon the idea, gave the command of the expedition to Lord Stirling, under whom it proved a failure. There, too, as elsewhere, Colonel Burr contrived to distinguish himself in circumstances that gave no promise of an opportunity. The American army had gone into winter quarters after a succession of discomfitures; and being still in the neighborhood of a powerful enemy, and far less able to cope with him than before, they were discouraged and *nervous*. Ten miles from the town of hovels in which the main body cowered, shivered and starved during that dreadful winter, there was a pass called the Gulf, from which the alarm was to be expected if the British army should menace an attack. A strong body of militia was stationed there to defend the pass and to watch the movements of the enemy. These militia fancied they heard the tramp of British columns in every nocturnal noise, and were continually sending false alarms to head-quarters, which obliged the general to get the troops under arms, and, frequently, to keep them on the alert during the whole night. These alarms, it was soon found, arose from the want of a proper system of observation, and from a general looseness of discipline in the corps. In these circumstances, General McDougal, who well knew the quality of Colonel Burr as a soldier, recommended General Washington to withdraw from the guard at the Gulf all officers superior in rank to Burr, and give him the command of the post. It was done.

On taking the command, Colonel Burr proceeded at once to put in force a system of the most rigorous discipline. He was ubiquitous as usual; visiting the most remote sentinels precisely at the moment when he was least expected, and when his presence was least agreeable. The daily drills were severe and regular; his detection of offenders magical and relentless.

To militiamen, who had been accustomed, while in winter quarters, to lead lives of perfect idleness, to leave camp and return to it almost at their pleasure, and to regard all persons possessing property calculated to solace the tedium of a soldier's winter, in the light of Tories, whom it was patriotism to plunder, Colonel Burr's system was insupportable. The better class of the troops saw that this unaccustomed rigor was necessary; but a majority were exceedingly discontented, and finally resolved, at any cost, to rid themselves of their commander. Burr was informed of their intention, and of the time when he was to receive his quietus. That evening, before ordering out the detachment, he caused every cartridge to be withdrawn from the muskets, and provided himself with a well-sharpened sword. It was a bright, moonlight evening, and as he marched along the line he looked the ringleaders in the face, keenly watching for the first offensive movement. At length a man stepped from the ranks, leveled his musket at him, and cried out, "Now is your time, my boys." With a quickness and self-possession peculiarly his own, Colonel Burr raised his sword and struck the arm of the mutineer above the elbow, breaking the bone, and leaving the limb hanging by little more than the skin.

"Take your place in the line, sir," said the colonel, quietly.

The man obeyed. In a few minutes the corps was dismissed; the man went to bed; the amputation of the arm was completed by the surgeon; and no more was heard of the mutiny. While Colonel Burr commanded at that post, the army slept in their huts undisturbed. There was not one false alarm.

It was during this winter that the popularity of General Gates, and the discontents of some officers nearer the person of General Washington, gave rise to the well-known cabal to supplant the commander-in-chief. During the previous autumn, while Washington had lost Philadelphia, and experienced little but disaster, the fortune of war, rather than his own generalship, had given Gates the glory of Burgoyne's surrender, an event which electrified the world, and raised General Gates to a popularity disproportioned to his merits. Colonel Burr was too young an officer to take a leading part in the move-

ments against General Washington ; but it appears to have had his sympathy. His dislike to the general was rooted ; and the general, though he trusted and valued Colonel Burr as an officer, is said, even at this time, to have distrusted him as a man.

With the commencement of active operations in the spring, these intrigues ceased; and the murmurs against the commander-in-chief were soon drowned in the applause which rewarded his partial success at the battle of Monmouth. In that action Colonel Burr commanded, in the absence of his seniors, one of the brigades of Lord Stirling's division, the brigade consisting of his own regiment, and parts of two others. On this occasion, his activity and vigilance, his long-continued exertions during three of the hottest days and nights of summer, came near proving fatal to him. All through the sultry night that preceded the battle, he was on the alert, surveying the ground and preparing for the fight.

From before the dawn of the eventful day until late in the evening, his men were under arms, either engaged or waiting orders, exposed to a sun so powerful as to be only less fatal than the enemy's fire. Toward noon, while Stirling was thundering away with his artillery at the enemy, Colonel Burr perceived a detachment of the British issuing opposite him from the wood which hemmed in the small marshy plain in which the battle was fought. Before him was a morass over which a bridge had been thrown to the solid ground beyond. Eager for a share in the glory of the day, he instantly gave the word for his brigade to cross this bridge, and march toward the approaching enemy. When about half his force had crossed, and were within the enemy's fire, one of General Washington's aids galloped up to Colonel Burr and ordered him to halt his men, and hold them where they were until further orders. Burr remonstrated vehemently. He said it was madness to halt with his force so divided that it could not be formed, and though within range of the enemy's artillery could make no effectual resistance. The aid-de-camp replied that the order was peremptory and must be obeyed, then rode away, leaving Colonel Burr in a position most distressing.

The cannon-balls soon began to roar above the heads of his men, and to strike with threatening proximity. Soon Colonel Burr saw brave men begin to fall about him, in consequence, as he thought, of blundering generalship; and his feelings toward the commander-in-chief were deeply embittered. In a few minutes Colonel Dummer, second in comand to Burr, was killed; and, soon after, at a moment when Colonel Burr had by chance thrown his leg forward, a ball struck his horse on the saddle-girth, killed the animal instantly, and tumbled his rider headlong on the ground. Burr was up again in a moment uninjured. As no further orders arrived, the men who had crossed the bridge rejoined their comrades; and what their commander had fondly hoped would have been a glorious and successful charge resulted in confusion, demoralization, and loss. Smarting under this disappointment, it is not surprising that Burr should have warmly taken the side of General Lee in the contest which ensued between that officer and General Washington. It was in a letter to Burr that Lee made the remark frequently quoted, that he was going to resign his commission, retire to Virginia, and learn to hoe tobacco, "which I find," said the irate and sarcastic general, "is the best school to form a consummate *general*."

It was late in the night after the battle, before Colonel Burr threw himself upon the ground to sleep. What with the heat, and with his labors, which had been unremitted for forty hours, he was completely exhausted, and he sank into so profound a sleep that he had lain for some hours in the morning sun before he awoke. The effect of this exposure was extremely injurious. On getting up he could scarcely walk, so stiffened were his limbs; and in the course of the day worse symptoms appeared. His constitution did not recover from the effects of those days and nights at Monmouth for more than five years, the disease having finally taken the form of chronic diarrhea, from which his abstemiousness in diet at length, but very gradually, relieved him. During the rest of the Monmouth campaign, it was with difficulty and pain that he performed the duties of his command.

Immediately after the battle, he was dispatched by General

Washington to move about in the vicinity of New York, to procure information respecting the motions and intentions of the enemy; which latter it was of the first importance to ascertain. He was desired "to send one, two, or three trusty persons over to the city to get the reports, the newspapers, and the *truth*, if they can," and "to employ three, four or more persons to go to Bergen Heights, Weehawk, Hoebuck, or any other heights thereabout, convenient to observe the motions of the enemy's shipping." This commission he executed to the satisfaction of General Washington, and, returning after an absence of some weeks to the main body, was ordered to march with his regiment to West Point, "with all convenient dispatch, marching ten miles a day, as water and ground will permit." The regiment, however, marched without its commanding officer, as he was selected by General Washington to perform the delicate duty of conducting certain influential Tories within the British lines. That done, he proceeded to West Point, his health being then completely broken.

Finding himself in the autumn quite unfit for duty, he took a short leave, and spent a few weeks at his old home in Elizabethtown, greatly to the improvement of his health. Assured that nothing but some months of repose would place him beyond the danger of relapse, he applied to General Washington for leave "to retire from *pay* and duty" till the next campaign. "My anxiety to be out of pay," said he, "arises in no measure from intention or wish to avoid any requisite service. But too great a regard to malicious surmises, and a delicacy perhaps censurable, might otherwise hurry me unnecessarily into service, to the prejudice of my health, and without any advantage to the public." General Washington replied that this was carrying delicacy a little *too* far; it was not customary, and it would be unjust; and, therefore, while he had the leave asked for, his pay would be continued. Upon the receipt of the general's reply, Colonel Burr repaired forthwith to West Point, being unwilling to accept a furlough unless his pay was intermitted.

During part of the winter he was the officer in command of

that important post. He was now twenty-three years old, but the youthfulness of his appearance still gave rise to ludicrous incidents. One day, while he was at West Point, a farmer came to the works, and asked to see Colonel Burr. An orderly sergeant conducted him to the apartment where Colonel Burr was.

"Sir," said the farmer, "I wish to see Colonel Burr, as I have something to say to him."

"You may proceed," was the reply, "I am Colonel Burr."

The countryman looked incredulous, and said, "I suppose you are Colonel Burr's *son*."

The sentinel at the door overheard this colloquy, and Burr thus acquired the nickname in the regiment of *Colonel Burr's son*.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE WESTCHESTER LINES.

CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY BEFORE COLONEL BURR TOOK THE COMMAND — SUPPRESSES PLUNDERING — HIS HABITS AS A SOLDIER — DESTROYS THE BLOCK FORT — LOVE ADVENTURE BY NIGHT — RESIGNS HIS COMMISSION — TESTIMONY OF THE MEN WHOM HE COMMANDED — ANECDOTES — INTERVIEW WITH MRS. ARNOLD AT PARAMUS — EFFECTS OF THE WAR UPON HIS CHARACTER AND FORTUNE.

IN January, 1779, Colonel Burr was appointed to a post of greater importance and difficulty than any he had previously held, and one in which he acquired his greatest distinction as a soldier. He was placed in command of the "lines" in Westchester county, New York, a region lying between the posts of the British at Kingsbridge, and those of the Americans fifteen or twenty miles above them.

This district of country, from the day the British were masters of the city of New York, was more exposed to the worst ravages of war than any other portion of the United States. A gentleman who lived in it during the first five years of the contest, says that the county was "a scene of the deepest distress. From the Croton to Kingsbridge every species of rapine and lawless violence prevailed. No man went to his bed but under the apprehension of having his house plundered or burned, and himself or family massacred before morning. Some, under the character of Whigs, plundered the Tories; while others, of the latter description, plundered the Whigs. Parties of marauders, assuming either character or none, as suited their convenience, indiscriminately assailed both Whigs and Tories. So little vigilance was used on our part, that emissaries and spies of the enemy passed and repassed without interruption." What added to the evil was, that the lower part of the county contained a large number of houses of considerable pretension, the residences of wealthy farmers or wealthier

citizens. The region was one to reward enterprising marauders.

Colonel Burr entered upon the command of the "lines" on the 13th of January; his head-quarters being at White Plains, twenty-seven miles above the city. His line of posts extended from the Hudson to the Sound, fourteen miles; White Plains being midway between the two waters. His great objects were to prevent unlicensed communication with the enemy, to keep their spies from reaching the upper country, and to put a stop to the scenes of robbery and bloodshed for which the region was notorious.

The very morning on which he assumed the command, an occurrence took place which let him into the secret of the disorders. On his arrival in camp, a few days before, he had discovered that of all the duties devolving on the force about to be under his command, the one most in favor with officers and with privates, with regulars and with militia, was *scouting;* and that an expedition of the kind was then on foot, to be led by Colonel Littlefield, Burr's predecessor. Not wishing to begin his reign with an ungracious act of authority, he did not countermand the proposed excursion, though its advisableness was by no means apparent to him. On the contrary, he thought it ill-advised, and unnecessary. Nevertheless, on the very evening before he entered formally upon the duties of the station, Colonel Littlefield, with his scouting party of one hundred and fifty men, set out from White Plains, with the ostensible object of watching the enemy's movements in the neighborhood of New Rochelle. Colonel Burr was most strenuous in urging Littlefield to respect the property of friend and foe. The party were gone all night. In the morning, to the equal astonishment and disgust of Colonel Burr, the troops came straggling in loaded with plunder, and leading horses with mountains of bedding, blankets, and clothing on their backs. Officers and men seemed equally concerned in the robberies. Before the party had been in an hour, farmers from New Rochelle came into camp complaining piteously of the plunder of their houses and stables, asserting their friendliness to the patriotic cause, and imploring Colonel

Burr to restore their property. "Sir," wrote that officer in his report to General McDougal, "till now, I never wished for arbitrary power; I could gibbet half a dozen good Whigs with all the venom of an inveterate Tory!"

Colonel Burr's resolution was instantly taken. The plunder, as it came in, was deposited by the plunderers in a certain spot, to await an *equitable* division among the zealous party. Burr seized the whole of it, and proceeded immediately to take measures for its restoration. He took so decided a stand on the occasion, and made it so evident that he was in earnest, and that he was a man to be obeyed, that this affair, apparently inauspicious, was the beginning of a new order of things in the Westchester lines. For the time, however, he was utterly disgusted; particularly when he found that the officers, nearly to a man, secretly or openly favored the system of plunder. "Truly an ominous commencement," he wrote to his general. "*Is this the promised protection?* I read in the face of every child I pass; for the whole *honor* of the expedition redounds to me. I now perceive," he added, "from whence arose the ardor for scouting." The old general approved his conduct, but advised him to deal tenderly with the plunderers, "as they are brave, and are very sore by the plundering of the Tories."

Burr began that very day to set on foot a new system. He rode to every post before night set in, and announced his determination to protect all the peaceable inhabitants of the county, whether Whig or Tory, and to punish all marauders with the utmost severity of military law. Any officer who so much as connived at robbery he would send up to the general's quarters with a file of men, the hour the crime was discovered. He began, immediately, to make out a list of all the inhabitants of the district, and divided them into classes, Tories, Whigs, timid Whigs, spies, horse-thieves, and others, designating each by certain secret marks opposite his name. He also made the outline of a map, on which, as his knowledge of the country increased, he marked the roads, swamps, creeks, woods, hiding places and by-paths, which might be made available by disaffected persons in escaping pursuit, or evading ob-

servation. He organized the respectable young men of the county into a corps of horsemen, to serve without pay, and on special services when summoned, and in transmitting intelligence. So complete and efficient a system of videttes, patrols, and signals was established, that nothing of the slightest importance could take place in any part of the county without immediate information of it being dispatched to head-quarters. To prevent the intrusion of the enemy's spies, who had frequently come to head-quarters on frivolous pretexts, he would not allow any one who lived below his line of posts to pass them, but appointed a few well-known persons to receive their communications and complaints, and forward them to head-quarters. Another advantage of this regulation was, that it diminished the number of vexatious applications for redress, of slight or imaginary grievances, with which previous commanders had been beset.

Colonel Burr soon had an opportunity of showing the troops and the people that he would be as strict in enforcing his regulations as he was ingenious in devising them. A few days after the affair of the scouters, the house of one Gedney was robbed by night, and the family insulted and alarmed. The next morning, a son of Gedney, disregarding the rule that no one from below might go direct to head-quarters, made his way, by secret paths, to Colonel Burr, and laid before him his complaint. Burr's first act was to order the young man into confinement for breaking the rule; which done, he bent all his energies and all the resources of his system to the detection of the plunderers. He rode over to the plundered house, where he learned that the marauders, having worn disguises, had not been recognized by Gedney or his family. By what means he detected them was unknown; but before twenty-four hours had elapsed, every man of the party had been secured, and a great part of the stolen property recovered. Upon referring to his register, Colonel Burr found that Gedney was a Tory; but he was known to have taken no active part against the patriots; and Burr had promised that all such should be protected. He therefore caused the robbers to be drawn up in presence of the troops, laden with their booty,

and then had them conducted by a company of soldiers to Gedney's house. There, he required them, first, to restore the stolen goods; next, to pay in money for such as had been lost or damaged; thirdly, he compelled each man to present Gedney with a sum of money, as a compensation for his fright and loss of time; fourthly, he had each robber tied up and flogged ten lashes; lastly, he made each of them ask pardon of the old man, and promise good behavior in future. All these things were done with the utmost deliberation and exactness, and the effects produced by them were magical. Not another house was plundered, not another family was alarmed, while Colonel Burr commanded in the Westchester lines. The mystery and swiftness of the detection, the rigor and fairness with which the marauders were treated, overawed the men whom three campaigns of lawless warfare had corrupted, and restored confidence to the people who had passed their lives in terror.

That Colonel Burr was a wizard or necromancer, and could tell a thief by looking into his face, was the firm belief of a large number of his men; an opinion which received frequent confirmation from the remarkable talent he possessed for holding his tongue till the moment arrived for speaking. Among other incidents, the following was adduced as a proof of his supernatural powers. On the day of his arrival in camp, before he had assumed the command, and before he had established any means of procuring intelligence, he visited all the posts, and took a wide survey of the country. On his return, he said to a lieutenant whom he knew, "Drake, that post on the North river will be attacked before morning; neither officers nor men know any thing of their duty; you must go and take charge of it; keep your eyes open, or you will have your throat cut." Lieutenant Drake went, and the event proved as Burr had predicted. The fort *was* attacked that night by a company of horse, whom Drake repulsed, with loss to them and honor to himself. When he returned next morning to head-quarters, bearing with him the trophies of war, and told his story to his comrades, every one wonderingly asked, how could Burr know *that?*

The habits of the man, too, were the theme of admiration among the troops. His diet was simple and spare in the extreme; he slept as lightly as a hare, and a wonderfully short time. He would throw himself upon a couch of buffalo skins, all accoutered as he was, sometimes without even taking off his boots, and after sleeping an hour or two, would spring up, perfectly awake in a moment, and, calling two or three of his trusty horsemen, mount and ride from post to post, visiting every guard and sentinel of his command, and returning at daylight to snatch another hour of sleep. During the whole of that winter, with the exception of two nights, when he was *very* differently employed, he rode from sixteen to twenty-four miles every night, between midnight and daylight, changing his route continually, so that he was always expected at all points; and if at any time he was less expected than at any other, *then*, of all other times, he was sure to present himself. He thus at every station exerted the spell of his personal presence, and every man acted as under the eye of his commander. While requiring from officers and men an amount of duty and an exact obedience to which they had never before been accustomed, he was not less particular in attending to their health, comfort, and pleasure. Their clothing, food, lodgings, and medicines, were objects of his thoughtful care, and he even contrived games for the amusement of the men when off duty.

Men treated justly, and commanded ably, never behave in any but one way, and that is gloriously *well*. The troops under command of Colonel Burr did so. They caught his spirit, and seconded his endeavors with enthusiasm. During the first weeks of his command, there were several contests with gangs of horse-thieves and other robbers, in which the troops fought with Burr's own intrepidity. Once, in that winter, Governor Tryon came out of New York with two thousand men for the purpose of driving off cattle, and of destroying certain salt-works in Westchester county, on the shore of Long Island Sound. Burr received instant information of this formidable movement, and sent word to General Putnam, who was then nearer the enemy than himself, that if

he would keep them at bay for a few hours, he would himself fall upon their rear and give a good account of them. Burr set out immediately with all his force, regular and irregular, and marched toward the Sound. On the way he received from General Putnam the information that Tryon had turned off toward Connecticut; which induced Colonel Burr to change the direction of his march. A few hours later, he learned that this information was erroneous, when he again altered his course, and marched with such rapidity that he got within cannon-shot of Governor Tryon's rear before night. The British, now thoroughly frightened, made off with such celerity as to escape Burr's exhausted force, leaving all their cattle and plunder behind them, and a large number of stragglers.

Soon after this affair, the British erected a block fort in the lower part of the county, which Colonel Burr resolved to destroy. This fort was in the enemy's country, within a few miles of a post where some thousands of the British troops were quartered; and it was therefore necessary to effect its destruction with little noise, and with great dispatch. According to his custom, Colonel Burr began by personally and thoroughly inspecting the edifice, and the country adjacent; noting accurately the distances, and measuring with his eye the height of the port-holes. Hand-grenades, rolls of port-fire, canteens filled with inflammable materials, and short ladders, were next provided; and a number of men, volunteers, were carefully instructed in the use of those agents of destruction. Forty volunteers were to form the party of attack, twenty of whom carried the inflammables and the ladders. Early in the evening the expedition left camp, and reached a place one mile from the fort about two o'clock in the morning. Here the party halted. Colonel Burr now disposed of his men so as to cut off the escape of the garrison, and ordered Captain Black, with the party of volunteers, to advance silently and swiftly to the fort, disregarding the challenge of the sentinels, to place the ladders, and throw into each port-hole a mass of the combustibles with a slow match attached. The plan succeeded to admiration. Before the garrison was awake, the fort was on fire past extinguishing. Hand-grenades were then thrown

into the upper port-holes, which drove the troops below. In a very few minutes they were glad enough to escape from the burning house and surrender. The fort was completely destroyed, and Colonel Burr reached camp soon after daybreak, with a long file of prisoners, and without the loss of a single man of his own party. The success of this little enterprise, and its audacity, gave new éclât to the name of the officer who planned it.

Colonel Burr's night rides have been mentioned above, and an allusion made to the fact that on *two* nights of the winter he was otherwise engaged. The story of his adventures on those nights he used to tell with peculiar pleasure, and it is surprising that so singular a narrative should not have been given to the public by some of the collectors of revolutionary incidents. The tale strikingly exemplifies Burr's executive talent.

Over the Hudson river, fifteen miles or more from the shore, lived the beautiful and charming Mrs. Prevost. From his outpost on the Hudson, Colonel Burr could see the hills among which nestled the home of this beloved family, but between them rolled a river, two miles wide, and infested with the gun-boats and sloops of the enemy, while beyond it stretched an expanse of country, held sometimes by one party, sometimes by the other, but either of whom would prevent or delay the progress of a soldier bound on an errand of love. The duties of Burr's command, too, were onerous and incessant. By day, he was an autocratic magistrate, hearing complaints, deciding disputes, writing reports, inspecting troops, sending off prisoners, purchasing supplies. We see him sending up a number of prisoners handcuffed in couples and, as they start, the guard being greatly outnumbered by them, he sends a sergeant along the line to cut the strings of their breeches, which obliged them to employ their other hand in holding up that important garment. Again, he writes to the general, "There are a number of women here of bad character, who are continually running to New York and back again; if they were men, I should flog them without mercy." Then, he is scouring the country, far and near, for shoes, for

molasses, for wheat, for rum; which last, he tells the general he can buy at White Plains at twenty dollars a gallon. By night he was riding among his posts and sentinels, knowing well that only vigilance like his kept the guards from being surprised; as was sufficiently proved when that vigilance was withdrawn.

Yet in spite of these difficulties, he contrived twice during the winter to visit Paramus. In achieving these visits, he equaled Leander in daring, and surpassed him so much in ingenuity as to get over his Hellespont with a dry over-coat, and to go glowing, instead of dripping, into the arms of his Hero. Six of his trustiest troopers, men whom he knew were devoted to him, he sent early in the evening to a place on the banks of the Hudson, since and for ever made classic ground by the residence of Washington Irving. Under the lofty bank of the river, there he had caused an ample barge to be moored, well furnished with blankets and buffalo skins. Earlier by some hours than usual, Burr left his quarters at White Plains, mounted on a small, swift horse, and galloped rapidly to the river side, visiting posts and sentries as he went. His perfect manner of procuring intelligence had made him certain that nothing requiring his presence would occur before morning, yet he provided for every probability and possibility of danger, and for any unforeseen delay that might occur in his return. At nine in the evening, his faithful troopers at the barge heard the clattering of hoofs, and in a moment their commander stood in their midst, bridle in hand. Instantly, and without the interchange of a syllable, the girth was unloosened, ropes were adjusted about the body of the panting steed, and, by the method well known to farriers, the animal was gently thrown and bound; then lifted by main strength and placed on the bed provided for him in the boat. Burr stepped aboard; the men plied the muffled oars with a will; and, within half an hour, the boat grazed the opposite shore. In the same silence, and with the same celerity, as before, the horse was lifted out, unbound, and got upon his feet. A little rubbing and walking up and down restored the animal to his wonted condition. The boat was drawn snugly up on the

shore; the men laid down in the bottom of it to sleep; while Burr mounted and rode rapidly away up the hill toward the home of his heart. Before midnight, he was there. Two hours of bliss flew fast—how swiftly, lovers know. Then again to horse. About four in the morning, he was with his faithful crew on the river's bank, when the poor nag was astonished once more in the manner just described, and the party recrossed the river. Arrived on the other side, Colonel Burr mounted, rode over to camp, which was seven miles from the river, challenging sentinels, visiting posts, and comporting him so exactly in his usual manner, that not the slightest suspicion arose of the singular way in which he had passed the night. A little before daylight, quite in his accustomed style, he gave up his horse and threw himself upon his couch. Except the two or three individuals to whom the secret was necessarily confided, not a man even of those who had aided him, knew the object of that night excursion. Twice, as before stated, he visited Mrs. Prevost in the same manner, and with equal success, while he commanded the lines of Westchester.

But no constitution could long bear such exhausting efforts, and Burr's was seriously impaired when he began them. As the spring drew on, the attacks of his disease became more frequent, and he was compelled to the conclusion that only a very long period of repose could render him fit for the duties of a campaign. On the 10th of March, 1779, he wrote to General Washington resigning his commission, giving as the reason, his physical inability to perform the duties of his command. General Washington, in accepting his resignation, observed that "he not only regretted the loss of a good officer, but the cause which made his resignation necessary." And so, after four years of active service, Colonel Burr ceased to belong to the army.

What occurred in Westchester after his retirement shows in a striking light the value of his services there. Samuel Young, who lived in the county during the war, and was one of Burr's troop of irregular horse, and after the peace held the office of surrogate, writes with more minuteness on this point than any other of Burr's fellow-soldiers. He says that during

the period of Burr's command, only two attempts were made by the enemy to surprise our guards, in both of which they were defeated; but after he left, Colonel Thompson, "a man of approved bravery," succeeded, and, in open day, the enemy surprised him at head-quarters, took him prisoner, killed or captured all his men, except about thirty, who ran away. Soon after, Mr. Young's father's house was burned by a party of the enemy; and, ere long, the American lines were moved twenty miles beyond those which Burr had so completely defended. And even there the posts were not safe from surprise. The next year Colonel Green, who then commanded in the lines, and had his head-quarters near the Croton river, was attacked and killed, together with his second in command, and a large number of officers and men.

Mr. Young concludes a long narrative of Colonel Burr's achievements in Westchester county, in the following words: "Having perused what I have written, it does not appear to me that I have conveyed any adequate idea of Burr's military character. It may be aided a little by reviewing the effects he produced. The troops of which he took command were, at the time he took the command, undisciplined, negligent, and discontented. Desertions were frequent. In a few days these very men were transformed into brave and honest defenders; orderly, contented, and cheerful; confident in their own courage, and loving to adoration their commander, whom every man considered as his personal friend. It was thought a severe punishment, as well as disgrace, to be sent up to the camp, where they had nothing to do but to lounge and eat their rations. During the whole of this command there was not a single desertion, not a single death by sickness, not one made prisoner by the enemy; for Burr had taught us that a soldier with arms in his hands ought never, under any circumstances, to surrender; no matter if he was opposed to thousands, it was his duty to fight. After the first ten days there was not a single instance of robbery. The whole country under his command enjoyed security. The inhabitants, to express their gratitude, frequently brought presents of such articles as the country afforded; but Colonel Burr would ac-

cept no present. He fixed reasonable prices, and paid in cash for every thing that was received, and sometimes, I know, that these payments were made with his own money. Whether these advances were repaid, I know not. Colonel Simcoe, one of the most daring and active partisans in the British army, was, with Colonels Emerick and Delancey, opposed to Burr on the lines, yet they were completely held in check. But perhaps the highest eulogy on Colonel Burr is, that no man could be found capable of executing his plans, though the example was before them. When Burr left the lines a sadness overspread the country, and the most gloomy forebodings were too soon fulfilled."

Richard Platt, who was adjutant-general to General McDougal at the time, speaks of Colonel Burr's conduct in similar terms. The officers, the soldiers, and the inhabitants, he says, though all unknown to Colonel Burr before, "were inspired with confidence by a system of consummate skill, astonishing vigilance, and extreme activity, which, in like manner, made such an impression on the enemy, that after an unsuccessful attack on one of his advanced posts, he never made any other attack on our lines during the winter. His humanity, and constant regard to the security of the property and persons of the inhabitants from injury and insult, were not less conspicuous than his military skill. No man was insulted or disturbed. The health of the troops was perfect. Not a desertion during the whole period of his command, nor a man made prisoner, although the colonel was constantly making prisoners. A country, which for three years before had been a scene of robbery, cruelty, and murder, became at once the abode of security and peace. Though his powers were despotic, they were exercised only for the peace, the security, and the protection of the surrounding country and its inhabitants."

Colonel Burr had not yet done with war. In June, when a large force of British troops seemed to threaten West Point, Colonel Burr was at Newburg, a guest of General McDougal, who was in great alarm because of his repeated failures to get word to General Washington of the movements of the enemy. The English general had stationed troops and Tories in

the passes of the mountains, who captured or killed the messengers. In these circumstances, General McDougal, who well knew Burr's ability, requested him, as a personal favor, to undertake the mission. Colonel Burr, sick as he was, and dangerous as was the errand, consented, and succeeded. He carried no written dispatch, but gave General Washington a verbal account of the critical position of affairs, which induced him to march forthwith toward the Highlands.

In making the journey across Orange county, he had a ludicrous contest with a mule, which he was fond of describing for the amusement of children ever after. The country had been swept of its horses, and arriving at the Townsend iron works with his horse completely worn out, he could procure no substitute but a half-broken mule called "Independence," notorious for its obstinate and vicious disposition. There was no choice but to attempt this animal; and, accordingly, Burr, in the presence of a number of the country people, mounted, and urged him onward. The mule was true to his name, and would not move. The rider whipped and spurred, the by-standers pulled and shouted, the mule kicked and reared. After a minute or two of these proceedings, the infuriated beast bolted from the crowd, and ran up a steep bank, and reached the top before his rider could stop him. On arriving there, Burr managed to turn him round, and was trying every argument to induce him to descend, when the mule appeared suddenly to conceive an idea. About half way down the hill there was a platform, with a large opening in it, through which charcoal was accustomed to be "shot," a prodigious heap of which had accumulated below on the side of the hill. The mule, with malice in his mind, made for this aperture, and leaped through it upon the coal. But the rider was not to be thrown so easily; and down the mountain of charcoal, the mule and the man slowly slid together, amid clouds of dust, and the laughter of the crowd. When they reached the bottom, the animal showed signs of being more tractable, and, after being led a mile or two, went perfectly well; and was ever after a tolerably behaved mule.

This journey cost him dear. He went immediately after to

Connecticut, where, at New Haven, he was compelled to take to his bed, and spend some days in complete quiet. While still extremely debilitated, he heard of the landing of two thousand of the enemy's troops, one thousand at East Haven, and the others at West Haven. Governor Tryon, Burr's old acquaintance, commanded the force which landed at East Haven, where he distinguished himself, in his usual style, by setting the town on fire and allowing his men to commit disgraceful excesses. The people of New Haven were in dreadful alarm. The women and children were hurried from the town. The roads leading to the country were crowded with fugitives and vehicles, hastily loaded with household goods. Hearing that the enemy were actually approaching, Colonel Burr rose from his bed, dressed himself, and proceeded to a part of the town where he was informed the militia of the place had assembled. Finding them panic-stricken and about to fly, he addressed them, and offered to lead them against the enemy; but terror possessed their souls, and in a few minutes the whole body melted away and vanished from the scene. He was then told that the students of Yale College had organized themselves into military companies, and were now drawn up on the College green. He galloped to the spot, and reining up his horse in front of the youthful corps, he told them who he was, urged them to set an example, to march out against the ruthless foe, and defend the rights of which they would soon become the inheritors, or the loss of which it would soon be theirs to deplore. The exploits of Aaron Burr were familiar at least to every young man in New England; and when, at the conclusion of his speech, Colonel Burr asked them to receive him as their leader, and, under his command, attack the enemy, there was no hesitation or faltering among them. They marched into the town, where they were joined by a small body of militia, and then advanced boldly toward the enemy. On coming near them, some shots were exchanged, and Governor Tryon, not knowing how great a force might be opposed to him, halted, and then fell back a little to wait for his artillery. Colonel Burr has kept him from advancing for three or four priceless hours, during which all the

women and children, the sick, and immense quantities of valuable property were removed to places of safety. When, at length, Tryon, with all his force, began again to move toward the town, Burr led off his regiment of boys in excellent order. The old soldier delighted to tell this little story. He was a lover of young life, and proud of the confidence which the young ever reposed in him. Nothing in his military career gave him such pleasure to look back upon as this comparatively trivial incident.

The excitement of this adventure sustained him while it lasted, but he dismounted from his horse only to go again to his bed. During the succeeding autumn and winter he did little but take care of his shattered constitution, and form plans for the prosecution of his legal studies.

In the summer of 1780 he was in New Jersey once more, and making such frequent visits to the house of Mrs. Prevost, as to excite a general belief among his friends that he was paying his court to the sister of that lady, Miss De Visme. Colonel Troup, as we read in one of his letters, tells Burr in June of this year, that the Miss Livingstons had inquired about him in a very friendly manner, and since he had been with them, he had had an opportunity of removing the suspicion they had of his courting Miss Visme. "They believe nothing of it now," adds Colonel Troup, "and attribute your visits to Paramus to motives of friendship for Mrs. Prevost and the family. Wherever I am, and can with propriety, you may be sure I shall represent this matter in its true light." From this it would appear that Colonel Burr had not yet confided his real object to his friends, of whom Colonel Troup was then one of the most intimate; and remained such, through all vicissitudes, for nearly seventy years.

In September, it was Colonel Burr's fortune to witness at the house of Mrs. Prevost a memorable scene.

The news of Arnold's treason was flying in awful whispers over the country. Soon after the first shock of the discovery, came touching descriptions of Mrs. Arnold's grief at her husband's crime, of which, it was universally believed, she had been ignorant up to the moment of his flight from West

Point. The historic reader is familiar with Hamilton's high-flown narrative of the scene which transpired under his own eyes.

"Arnold, a moment before setting out," wrote Hamilton to Colonel Laurens, "went into Mrs. Arnold's apartment, and informed her that some transactions had just come to light which must for ever banish him from his country. She fell into a swoon at this declaration; and he left her in it to consult his own safety, till the servants, alarmed at her cries, came to her relief. She remained frantic all day; accusing every one who approached her with an intention to murder her child (an infant in her arms); and exhibiting every other mark of the most genuine and agonizing distress. Exhausted by the fatigue and tumult of her spirits, her frenzy subsided toward evening, and she sank into all the sadness of affliction. It was impossible not to have been touched with her situation. Every thing affecting in female tears, or in the misfortunes of beauty; every thing pathetic in the wounded tenderness of a wife, or in the apprehensive fondness of a mother; and, till I have reason to change the opinion, every thing amiable in the sufferings of innocence; conspired to make her an object of sympathy to all who were present. She experienced the most delicate attention, and every friendly office, till her departure for Philadelphia."

This was the romantic falsehood of the affair. It was fitted to deceive the good-hearted Hamilton, who was then himself a lover, and therefore full of tenderness for all women; and the story was one which a young gentleman of a rhetorical turn, and who indeed owed his advancement to "the flowers of his pen," would delight to tell. It fell to Burr's lot to become acquainted with the repulsive truth. He was sitting one evening with Mrs. Prevost, when the approach of a party of horse was heard, and soon after, a lady vailed, and attired in a riding-habit, burst into the room, and hurrying toward Mrs. Prevost, was on the point of addressing her. Seeing a gentleman present whom, in the dim light of the apartment, she did not recognize, she paused, and asked in an anxious tone,

"Am I safe? Is this gentleman a friend?"

"Oh, yes," was Mrs. Prevost's reply, "he is my most particular friend, Colonel Burr."

"Thank God!" exclaimed Mrs. Arnold, for she it was; "I've been playing the hypocrite, and I'm tired of it."

She then gave an account of the way she had deceived General Washington, Colonel Hamilton, and the other American officers, who, she said, believed her innocent of the treason, and had given her an escort of horse from West Point. She made no scruple of confessing the part she had borne in the negotiations with the British general, and declared it was she who had induced her husband to do what he had done. She passed the night at Paramus, taking care to resume her acting of the outraged and frantic woman, whenever strangers were present. Colonel Burr's relations with the Shippen family, of which Mrs. Arnold was a member, had been of the most intimate character from childhood. They had been his father's friends; and the orphan boy had been taken from his mother's grave to their home in Philadelphia. He stood toward this fascinating, false-hearted woman almost in the light of a younger brother, and he kept her secret until she was past being harmed by the telling of it.

With this scene the history of Colonel Burr's military career may fitly close. He had borne well his part in the revolutionary struggle. That combination of qualities and defects which fits a man to be a successful military commander, he possessed in a more remarkable degree, perhaps, than any other American who has won distinction in war. If he had been as much in the eye of Napoleon as he was in Washington's, the emperor would have made a marshal of him, and he would have shared with Napoleon his splendid immortality. But for that, as for so much else, Aaron Burr had the misfortune to be born on the wrong continent.

During the four years of his connection with the army, his fortune was greatly impaired. Every officer who had any thing to lose, suffered in his circumstances in the Revolution, and Burr more than most. He had the popular and fatal vice of improvidence. At the age when Washington was earning three guineas a day in the woods, glad of the oppor-

tunity to do so, and rather proud of the fact than otherwise, Burr was spending, with inconsiderate generosity, the capital of his patrimony. With amazing talents for gaining money, he had an equally wonderful facility for getting rid of it. It slipped through his fingers; it ran out of his pocket; it would *not* stay with him. To see a fellow-soldier in distress, and to empty his purse for his relief, were simultaneous actions with him.

Nor did he spare expense in forwarding any scheme of his own, whether of pleasure or advantage. From his correspondence at this time, it is plain that he was a frequent lender of money to embarrassed friends. Colonel Troup tells him on one occasion that he had received from Mr. Edwards a thousand pounds of Burr's money, a part of which, says Troup, I shall take the liberty of borrowing, and send the rest to the owner. Ogden, as we have seen, sells Burr's horse, and writes to him that he can not send him the proceeds, for the excellent reason that he has spent them. These are fair examples of Burr's *looseness* in affairs pecuniary. It is a pleasant way enough while the money lasts; but it never does last. No fortune can stand the drain of an uncalculating improvidence. And a worse feature of the case is, that a man who is careless of *meum* is in frightful danger of losing some portion of his regard for *tuum*, also. "*The worth and dignity of gold*," was one of the regenerating phrases with which Goethe set right his age. The strong, slow characters that *support* the social fabric, know its truth by an instinct which they too often want who adorn, and cheer, who move and advance the race.

Generous we may truly call Colonel Burr. But there is a nobler generosity than that exercised by him; it is allied with frugality, and becomes possible through frugality. Burr was, at all periods of his life, extremely liable to be imposed upon. His feelings were easily moved; his acuteness utterly failed him the moment his tenderness was awakened; and he gave freely of what he never really felt the value to relieve distresses which he could not witness without pain.

Another tendency of his nature was strengthened by the

war. It is the soldier's art to instantly adapt means to ends; it is his duty, by all means, to gain his ends. His object, the destruction of the enemy, is simple, obvious, unmistakable; and, in compassing it, he not merely *may*, but *must*, be deaf to the cry of anguish. He is not merely released from the moral restraints of peace, but he is obliged to trample them under foot. He destroys without compunction; he kills without compassion. His mind is fixed upon his *object;* he burns merely to *succeed.* Victory alone, victory always, is accepted as proof of his ability. But in peace it is not always glorious to succeed; for then we estimate success chiefly by the means used to attain it.

Aaron Burr, like his father before him, was a man who had by nature a marvelous faculty of bringing things to pass. He saw his *object* with eagle clearness and he had a wonderful intuitive sense of the means, and all the means, and, particularly, the *readiest* means, by which that object could be reached. This faculty will be abundantly exemplified by-and-by. It is alluded to here, merely for the purpose of suggesting that four years of a soldier's life may have had the twofold effect, first, of intensifying his perception of objects to be gained, and, secondly, of diminishing his scrupulousness with regard to the use of means.

CHAPTER IX.

ADMISSION TO THE BAR, AND MARRIAGE.

THE AMERICAN BAR BEFORE THE REVOLUTION—BURR RESUMES HIS LEGAL STUDIES—HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH MRS. PREVOST—ADMISSION TO THE BAR—CHARACTER OF MRS. PREVOST—THEIR MARRIAGE—REMOVAL TO NEW YORK.

NEXT to war, the law had been, from an early period in the history of the colonies, the favorite profession with their young men of spirit. John Adams, in 1756, when he had just begun his legal studies, writes to a friend in justification of the choice he had made of a profession. One of his reasons was, that "the students in the law are very numerous, and some of them youths of which no country, no age, would need to be ashamed. And if," he adds, "I can gain the honor of treading in the rear, and silently admiring the noble air and gallant achievements of the foremost rank, I shall think myself worthy of a louder triumph than if I had headed the whole army of orthodox ministers." After the termination of the old French war, the law began to be a lucrative profession also. Joseph Reed, of Philadelphia, writing in 1767, when he had been but two years at the bar, mentioned that his professional income was a thousand pounds a year. He was, no doubt, unusually fortunate. But, at that time, there were not many occupations carried on in the colonies, in the exercise of which, a young man of two years' standing, could have earned so much.

The legal system, was, of course, in all respects, that of the mother country. The wig and gown were worn by lawyers and judges; and much is implied in that trivial circumstance. Young men of fortune thought their studies incomplete until they had resided two years at one of the Inns of Court in London. In the Temple Church may still be seen, or

might, a few years ago, some tablets erected to the memory of American students who died while pursuing their studies in London before the Revolution. If Aaron Burr had come upon the stage of action a few years earlier, it is likely enough that, with his pecuniary means, he would have sought, by such a residence abroad, to have hastened his ascent to the highest walks of the profession at home. For it was a great thing, and an honorable, in those days, even to have seen the country which the colonists were proud to call their own.

For eighteen months after leaving the army, Colonel Burr was an invalid, and he did little but visit his friends, read French, write letters, and wait upon Mrs. Prevost. In the autumn of 1780, his health having greatly improved, he began to study law in earnest, under Judge Patterson, of New Jersey. Judge Patterson was a thorough lawyer, and desired to make his pupils such, by grounding them well in the principles of the law, and not till afterward instructing them in the practice. Burr desired to reverse this order, and acquire the practice first. There were reasons why he wished to hurry into the practice of his profession: he was in love; his purse needed replenishing, or would soon need it; and it was certain, that if the independence of the colonies were secured, of which there seemed little doubt, Whig lawyers would monopolize the business of the profession, and the offices to which the profession leads. With the intention of attempting a short cut to the bar, he left the office of the methodical Patterson in the spring of 1781, and went to reside at Haverstraw, in New York, with Thomas Smith, a city practitioner of note, but now suspended from business by the war. Mr. Smith had a good library, and plenty of leisure. With him Burr made a peculiar and characteristic arrangement. For a certain sum, the lawyer agreed to devote a specified time to his pupil every day, and to answer any questions he might propose. Burr now read law, literally, day and night, sometimes spending twenty hours at his books out of the twenty-four; taking notes as he read; reserving doubtful points to be elucidated by his instructor, and endeavoring, in all ways, to acquire the familiar use of the weapons with which lawyers war with one

another and with justice. To become *expert*, not profound, was the object of his immediate exertions. Of such students it may be observed, that having become proficient in the practice, they are never drawn to meditate deeply upon the theory of their profession.

His letters, during the year, show that his favorite authors then were Chesterfield, Voltaire, and Rousseau. There was much studying of French in Burr's circle. The family of Mrs. Prevost was of Swiss origin, and French had been their native language. The "Hermitage," the family seat of the De Visme's, where Mrs. Prevost now resided, had a considerable library of French books, which nourished Burr's French tastes, and introduced to his notice several authors of whom he had been ignorant. In his letters to Mrs. Prevost, his favorite authors were frequently the theme of remark; to which she, as often, gracefully replies. She says on one occasion, that his favorable opinion of Voltaire pleased her, because it showed that he had a mind of his own. "The English," said she, "from national jealousy and envy to the French, detract him; but, without being his disciple, we may do justice to his merit, and admire him as a judicious and ingenious author." In another letter, she extols religion, and declares that "worlds should not purchase the little she possessed." To something Burr had said about Chesterfield, she replied, that the indulgence which he applauded in that author was the only part of his writings she thought reprehensible, but that only when all the world turn envoys, will Chesterfield be their proper guide. In one letter, she tells him, that their being the subject of much inquiry, conjecture, and calumny was no more than they ought to expect: "My attention to you," she adds, "was even pointed enough to attract the observation of all who visited the house; but your esteem more than compensated for the worst they could say."

Burr's reply to this letter is characteristic. He tells her that the calumniator shall one day repent his insolence and in the mean time, they must be more cautious in preserving appearances. "*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*, is a maxim," he says, "which would bear *sheets of comment and days of re-*

flection." They must not mind these trifles. "That mind," he adds, "is truly great which can bear with equanimity the trifling and unavoidable vexations of life, and be affected only by those events which determine our substantial bliss. Every period, and every situation has a portion of those trifling crosses; and those who expect to avoid them all, or conquer them all, must be wretched without respite." This train of remark was habitual with Colonel Burr all his days. To present a panoply of steel to the minor shafts of misfortune, to be quick to discern the event of real importance, to be neither elated nor depressed by whatever might occur, to bound lightly up after the farthest fall, to acquire every kind of degree of self-control, were what he chiefly enjoined upon his children, his pupils, and his protegées. Self-control, Burr would say, was the means of self-indulgence, and the condition of controlling others.

After reading law for six months at Haverstraw, he thought himself competent to practice; an opinion to which an event of the time probably contributed. In November of this year, the legislature of New York passed an act disqualifying all the Tory lawyers from practicing in the courts of that State. Burr no sooner heard of this than he resolved to make an effort to realize part of its benefits himself, and, a few days after, he was in Albany for the purpose of applying for admission to the bar. But difficulties arose. The rule of the court was, that candidates must have spent three years in the study of the law before admission, and Colonel Burr could scarcely pretend to more than one year's study. Nor could he find a lawyer in the State willing to make a motion for the court to set aside the rule. In these circumstances, the candidate undertook the management of the case himself. Having first conciliated the good will of the judge in private, and made him acquainted with the grounds of his application, he appeared in court at the proper time, made the requisite motion, and gave the reasons why he thought it should be granted. He said that he had begun his studies before the Revolution, and should long since have been entitled to admission to the bar, but for the service he had rendered as a soldier. "No

rule," he observed, "could be intended to injure one whose only misfortune is having sacrificed his time, his constitution, and his fortune to his country." The court decided that the rule with regard to the period of study might, for the reasons given, be dispensed with, provided the candidate could show that he possessed the requisite knowledge. The examining counsel, as may be imagined, gave him no indulgence. They wished his failure. But after an examination, prolonged, critical, and severe, which he passed triumphantly, he was licensed as an attorney. This event occurred on the 19th of January, 1782. On the 17th of April following, he was admitted as counselor. He was then twenty-six years of age.

He took an office in Albany, began the practice of the law, and seems almost immediately to have been immersed in business. He had acquired celebrity in the State as a soldier, and no man of his years had a wider circle of acquaintance among the class who indulge in profitable suits at law. The old Tory lawyers, who had enjoyed all the best business, before the Revolution, were now thrown out of the ranks of the profession by an act of the legislature, and Whig lawyers of any standing or promise were, at the moment, extremely few. Burr's engaging manner, distinguished origin, indefatigable devotion to business, and honorable fame, would, in any circumstances, have rendered his advancement in the profession certain and rapid. But in the actual state of things, they obtained for him in a very few months as profitable a business as was enjoyed by any lawyer in the State. Before he had been in practice three months, he felt so sure of his position and so satisfied with his prospects, that there seemed no longer any necessity for delaying his marriage.

That Colonel Burr, the most rising young man in the State of New York, handsome, fascinating, well-born, and famous, whose addresses few maidens in the country would have been inclined to repulse, should have chosen to marry a widow ten years older than himself, with two rollicking boys (one of them eleven years old), with precarious health, and no great estate, was a circumstance which seems to have been incomprehensible to his friends at the time, as it has since proved a

puzzle to the writers of biographical gossip. Upon the theory that Burr *was* the artful devil he has been said to be, all whose ends and aims were his own advancement, no man can explain such a marriage. Before the Revolution he had refused, point-blank, to address a young lady of fortune, whom his uncle, Thaddeus Burr, incessantly urged upon his attention. During the Revolution he was on terms of intimacy with all the great families of the State—the Clintons, the Livingstons, the Schuylers, the Van Rensselaers, and the rest; alliance with either of whom gave a young man of only average abilities, immense advantages in a State which was, to a singular extent, under the dominion of great families. But no considerations of this kind could break the spell which drew him, with mysterious power, to the cottage at remote and rural Paramus.

The lady was *not* beautiful. Besides being past her prime, she was slightly disfigured by a scar on her forehead. It was the graceful and winning manners of Mrs. Prevost that first captivated the mind of Colonel Burr. She was, indeed, in all respects, an estimable lady, affectionate, accomplished, well-versed in literature, and as much given to the practice as averse to the profession of piety. But it was in her character of LADY and woman of the world that she proved so irresistably pleasing to him on their first acquaintance. He used, in after years, to say, that in style and manners, she was without a peer among all the women he had known, and that if his own manners were in any respects superior to those of men in general, it was owing to the insensible influence of hers. The reader may, perhaps, have observed that young men of spirit and intelligence, who have been brought up in the severe, ungracious way of the stricter Puritans, are sometimes too keenly susceptible of the charm of manner, and are apt to attach to it an excessive importance.

But a more lasting charm of this lady was her cultivated mind. Burr was a lover of books, a lover of pictures, a lover of every thing which distinguishes man from the Puritan; and it was rare, indeed, in those days, to find a lady in America who had the kind of culture which sympathizes with such

tastes. In Europe, women were only beginning to emerge from the gross ignorance which was thought to be their proper condition; and in America, if they were not ignorant, few had the knowledge interesting to a man like Burr. Among his own female relatives there was penetrating and brilliant intellect enough; but how perverted, how repressed! Some of the most renowned ladies of the time, with a thousand virtues, scarcely ever looked into a book. Mrs. Putnam was mighty at the spinning-wheel; Mrs. Washington (as we lately learn from Mrs. Kirkland's pleasant pages) was a devotee of the knitting-needle; and the wife of another famous general was not a little proud of her patchwork quilts. Burr had met few ladies, in his earlier life, who, like Mrs. Prevost, were familiar with the most recent expressions of European intellect, who could talk intelligently with him about Voltaire, Rousseau, and Chesterfield, and could appreciate those authors without becoming their disciples. It was not mere compliment, when Burr told Mrs. Prevost that it was from knowing her that he had first learned to believe in the understanding of woman.

The two sons of Mrs. Prevost, so far from being regarded by Colonel Burr as an obstacle to his marriage, were really an inducement to it. He inherited his father's passion for training the young. He was not merely fond of children, but took the liveliest possible interest in their education. There was no period in all his long life when he had not a protegé under training. His system of education was, indeed, with all its merits, and with all the pains he bestowed in applying it, *fatally* deceptive; as was his own system of life. But that he took a most real and ardent interest and delight in the development of the youthful character, and spared no pains in promoting what he thought to be the right education of his protegés, there can be no doubt whatever. With a Saxon moral character, Aaron Burr might have been a schoolmaster of unheard-of excellence — such as the world waits for. Nothing, indeed, was more natural to him than the tone of the instructor. Some months before he was married he con-

cludes one of his letters to Mrs. Prevost in language which illustrates what I mean:

"You wrote me too much by Dom. I hope it was not from a fear that I should be dissatisfied with less. It is, I confess, rather singular to find fault with the quantity, when matter and manner are so delightful. You must, however, deal less in sentiments, and more in ideas. Indeed, in the letter in answer to my last, you will need to be particularly attentive to this injunction. I think constantly of the approaching change in our affairs, and what it demands. Do not let us, like children, be so taken with the prospect as to lose sight of the means. Remember to write me facts and ideas, and don't torment me with compliments, or yourself with sentiments to which I am already no stranger. Write but little, and very little at once."

In another letter he recommends her to buy one of the new Franklin stoves, and suggests the room in which it should be placed. After enlarging, in a style not common in love letters, upon the various good qualities of the stoves, and telling her that, as her little boy would be certain to burn himself at least once with it, it might be best to teach him the danger by slightly burning him, he concludes as follows:

"I confess I have still some transient distrusts that you set too little value on your own life and comfort. Remember, it is not yours alone; but your letters shall convince me. I waive the subject. I am not certain I shall be regularly punctual in writing you in this manner every day when I get at business; but I shall, if possible, devote one quarter of an hour a day to you. In return, I demand one half of an hour every day from you; more I forbid, unless on special occasions. This half hour is to be *mine*, to be invariably at the same time, and, for that purpose, fixed at an hour least liable to interruption, and as you shall find most convenient. Mine can not be so regular, as I only indulge myself in it when I am fatigued with business. The children will have each their sheet, and, at the given hour, write, if but a single word. *Burr*, at this half hour, is to be a kind of watchword."

While Burr was preparing for his examination, his slave

Carlos was going very frequently between Paramus and Albany, bearing letters and gifts. His letters were mostly in the decisive, commanding manner of the extracts just given, though sufficiently tender and considerate. A notorious calumniator has recently, in a work of great pretensions, insinuated that Colonel Burr, during this winter in Albany, lived on terms of scandalous intimacy with his landlady. The statement is false. Soon after his arrival in Albany, Burr was called upon by Mr. Van Rensselaer, the head of the distinguished family of that name. The two young men soon became intimate. Van Rensselaer was dissatisfied with Burr's lodgings, and in a spirit of friendliness and hospitality offered to find him better. Burr soon wrote to Mrs. Prevost that Van Rensselaer had succeeded perfectly to his wish. "I am with two maiden aunts of his," he said, "obliging and (incredible!) good-natured, the very paragons of neatness. Not an article of furniture, even to a tea-kettle, that would soil a muslin handkerchief. I have two upper rooms." In these apartments it was that he daily wrote such words as the following to a lady with whom he was anticipating a speedy marriage: "Though I write very little, it is still half my business; for whenever I find myself either at a loss what to do, or any how discomposed or dull, I fly to these sheets, and even if I do not write, I ponder upon it, and in this way sacrifice many hours without reflecting that time passes away."

On the 2d of July, 1782, by the Rev. David Bogart, of the Reformed Dutch church, Aaron Burr and Theodosia Prevost were married. They were forthwith established in an ample residence at Albany, where Colonel Burr relieved the monotony of business by assisting in the education of the two boys. One of the first uses he made of his new dignity of householder was to give a temporary home to a friend who was in love, and had a project of marriage which it was necessary for some reason to conceal. That friend was the well-known Major Popham, who was married at Colonel Burr's house, and who, fifty-four years after, held the pall which covered Burr's remains as they were borne to the grave.

Carlos made no more hurried journeys to Paramus. The charm of the "Hermitage" had departed from it. It may interest some readers to learn that traditions of the old house, and of the family who inherited it, still exist in the vicinity. Some of the walls of the house are standing, and serve as part of a modern structure. Some relics of its elegant contents, a picture, among other things, adorn a neighboring tavern. Stories of the grand company that used to assemble at the Hermitage are vaguely told by the older inhabitants; and descendants of Mrs. Prevost reside a few miles from the old estate, in an elegant abode, which contains interesting memorials of the olden time.

At Albany, in the first year of his marriage, was born Colonel Burr's only legitimate child, a daughter, whom he named Theodosia. She had a joyful welcome into the world, the beautiful child who was to have so terrible an exit from it. A father, ever fond, if not ever wise, received to his arms the infant who was to be to him so much more than a daughter, when her indomitable fidelity was all that linked him to the family of man.

Colonel Burr practiced law in Albany for more than eighteen months, with the greatest success possible in the circumstances of the time. As soon as peace was declared, he made arrangements for removing to New York. A house was hired for him in Maiden Lane, at two hundred pounds a year, the "rent to commence when the troops leave the city." That event, as New Yorkers are still annually reminded by parades and festivities, occurred on the 25th of November, 1783; soon after which date Colonel Burr removed his family to the city and began his career as a New York lawyer.

The preparatory period of Colonel Burr's life was now completely past. As a finished man and practiced lawyer he enters upon the new scene to contend with his equals for the honors of his profession and the prizes of society. Up to the present time his character and conduct have appeared only in an honorable light, because only the qualities in which he really excelled have been exhibited—his courage, his activity, his generosity, his address. John Adams testifies of him that

he came out of the revolutionary war "with the character of a knight, without fear, and an able officer," and the fact that so many excellent and discerning gentlemen admired and loved him, and that so many amiable ladies were his friends, is confirmatory of the assertion. I am convinced that society had nothing serious to charge him with up to the time of his joining the bar of this city. I am sure he had not been "profligate." The probabilities are in favor of the opinion that he had not yet had one amour of a criminal kind, nor incurred an obligation which he had not discharged.

It is important to bear this in mind, for the instructive and impressive moral of his story depends upon its truth. They who describe good men to be faultless, and bad men as devils, rob mankind of the benefit of their example. The good example discourages, and the bad one does not alarm us. We despair of imitating the one, and are not in the least afraid of coming to resemble the other. But when a good man is truly delineated, every one sees the simplicity and attainableness of goodness, and how many faults a man may have, and yet his character be essentially just and noble. How encouraging this to a youth who has sense enough to be conscious of his faults, and who aspires to emulate the sublime characters of history. So of bad men. When their characters are *truly* drawn, we are more likely to be surprised at the number of good qualities they possessed, than horrified at their bad ones. And this is, in truth, of all the facts in the case, the most appalling! That a man may be *so* good, and yet not GOOD; that he may come so near excellence, and yet so fatally miss it; that he may be so little removed in moral quality from many who pass the ordeal of life with little reproach, and yet incur so deep a damnation—these are the facts which move and scare us when we know aright and fully the men who figure in history as atrocious characters. Carlyle's delineation of Robespierre is the finest example, perhaps, of this correct portrayal of a bad man's character that has been given to the world. The frightened reader, as he closes the awful story, has no maledictions for the wretched tyrant; but sighing, says, "*I, too, might have been a Robespierre.*"

Youth is the lovely robe beneath which the character is concealed while it forms; or it is the flower which precedes the fruit, and which is often as beautiful on the tree that is going to bear ill fruit, or none, as upon that which will yellow the plain with its abundant golden showers.

CHAPTER X.

AT THE NEW YORK BAR.

New York in 1783 — John Adams's Impressions of the City — The Different kinds of Lawyers — Burr's Quality and Habits as a Lawyer — Anecdotes — Hamilton and Burr at the Bar — Emoluments of the Bar then — The Tastes and Home of Burr — Scenes at Richmond Hill.

Colonel Burr had removed to what we should now call a small town.

From 1722, when Jonathan Edwards had been accustomed to go out beyond the suburbs of New York to the banks of "Hudson's river," and meditate with ecstacy upon the deep things of his theology, to 1783, when his grandson moved down from Albany to his fine house in Maiden Lane, to practice law in the liberated city, was a period of sixty-one years, during which New York had increased in population from eight thousand to twenty-five thousand. It was the second city in the United States, Philadelphia having a population nearly twice as numerous. The State of New York, at that time, had less than three hundred thousand inhabitants, about a third of the number which now the city alone contains. In the year 1800, the city could only number sixty thousand inhabitants, and the State about half a million. The contractedness of Burr's sphere of labor it is necessary to bear in mind.

When John Adams made his triumphal progress from Boston to Philadelphia to attend the first Congress, he stopped a few days in New York, which he then saw for the first time, and described in his Diary. He says that he walked to every part of the city in one afternoon, and after seeing every thing in it worthy of a stranger's attention, went to the Coffee House and read the newspapers. His remarks, however, indi-

cate the wealth of the city. He speaks of the elegant country seats on the island; of the Broad Way, a fine street, very wide, and in a right line from one end to the other of the city; of the magnificent new church then building, which was to cost twenty thousand pounds; of the new hospital, a fine structure of stone; of a ship-yard, where a Dutch East India ship of eight hundred tons was building; of the "beautiful ellipsis of land, railed in with solid iron, in the center of which is a statue of his majesty on horseback, very large, of solid lead, gilded with gold, on a pedestal of marble, very high." The streets of the town, he adds, are "vastly more regular and elegant than those in Boston, and the houses are more grand, as well as neat. They are almost all painted, brick buildings and all."

In the course of a day or two, the observant and plain-spoken patriot had an opportunity of seeing the interior of one of the elegant country seats, near "Hudson's river." From what he says of the sumptuosity of his entertainment, we may infer that then, as now, the New Yorkers were profuse and ostentatious in their style of living. "A more elegant breakfast, I never saw," he writes; "rich plate, a very large silver coffee-pot, a very large silver tea-pot, napkins of the very finest materials, toast, and bread and butter, in great perfection. After breakfast, a plate of beautiful peaches, another of pears, and a muskmelon, were placed on the table." Napkins and silver plate, in 1774, were rare luxuries in all but the very highest circles of European nobility. The rich furniture of the New York houses excited the continual wonder of the honest Bostonian; but the people of the city pleased him not. "With all the opulence and splendor of this city," says he, "there is very little good-breeding to be found. We have been treated with an assiduous respect but I have not seen one real gentleman, one well-bred man, since I came to town. At their entertainments there is no conversation that is agreeable; there is no modesty, no attention to one another. They talk very loud, very fast, and all together. If they ask you a question, before you can utter three words of your answer, they will break out upon you

again, and talk away." New York strikes the Bostonian of to-day very much as it did John Adams in 1774.

The Revolution did not essentially change the character of the place, nor, as I conjecture, much retard its progress in wealth. But when the British troops evacuated the city, many of the wealthiest Tory families, all the British officials, and, indeed, most of those who had been regarded as the "society," of the town went with them, leaving it more exclusively a commercial city than it was. When we read in the letters and memoirs of the time allusions to the fascination of Colonel Burr's manners, and of the great things he accomplished merely by the charm of his address, we should, perhaps, attribute part of the effects to the general absence of personal style in the people. The honest, kindly, unornamental class of men were those over whom his sway was most absolute; and it was in a bustling, trading town, that he ran the brilliant part of his career.

Nor had he many competitors for the higher business of his profession. The history of the American bar remains unwritten, though the subject, to a writer able to handle it, presents unrivaled capabilities. We are left, therefore, to conjecture the strength of the legal profession when Burr rose to eminence in it. John Adams, in the part of his amusing Diary just referred to, speaks of two or three lawyers in the city to whom he was introduced, and whom he mentions as persons of importance. One of the handsome houses that adorned "the Broad Way," was pointed out to him as the residence of the famous lawyer "Mr. Smith," and it was Mr. Scott, "an eminent lawyer," whose "very large silver tea-pot" and "very large silver coffee-pot," excited Mr. Adams's astonishment. It is very evident that the law was a lucrative and important profession in New York before the Revolution. It is equally certain that the disfranchisement of all the Tory lawyers, and the complicated suits growing out of the laws confiscating the estates of Tories, gave to an able and active lawyer, just after the Revolution, a most productive field of exertion. Aaron Burr was a man to improve such an opportunity. He came here a practiced lawyer. His name and

lineage were of vast use to him. The memory of President Burr was fragrant in the adjacent States; and wherever men and women in those days were trying to live nobly, the name of Jonathan Edwards was a name of power, a name honorable and august. Hamilton and Adams both testify that, as well in politics as in law, the celebrity of Burr's father and grandfather contributed powerfully to his early success. Yet in later times we often find other leading federalists sneering at him as a man without connections; and nothing could more clearly prove the ignorance which prevailed in that party of the country they aspired to govern. As New England understood the word, no man had *such* connections as he. Scarcely a family in that country but would have esteemed it an honor to receive under their roof the descendant of Jonathan Edwards and President Burr.

Colonel Burr came to New York, apparently, with no intention to take any part in politics. As soon as the British had left the city, there was high excitement among the leading citizens relative to the offices which were to be filled. The State government had been organized long ago, and George Clinton was governor. But the city, remaining in the possession of the enemy, had deprived the governor of his choicest patronage, which now was to be bestowed, all at once, upon long-expectant Whigs. Some influential friends at Albany, who had a great opinion of Colonel Burr's talents for the dispatch of business, urged him to apply for an appointment in the city. He said, in reply, that he was unwilling to be a competitor with any gentleman for an office. Then, said Judge Bogart, you must be contented with the character of a private gentleman, for there are long lists of applicants for all the offices in the city and county of New York. And a private gentleman he remained. The steps by which he was gradually drawn from the exclusive pursuit of his profession to mingle in political strife, will be narrated in a subsequent chapter. It is convenient now to regard him only as a lawyer, in which character he chiefly presents himself during the first eight years of his residence in New York. True, he served for two sessions, those of 1784 and 1785, in the State legisla-

ture; but he attended the chamber only at important crises. From 1783 until 1791, the practice of the law absorbed the greater part of his time and attention. He was an ambitious man, then as always. But, until the formation of the general government in 1789, what was there in politics to excite desire in a man of ability?

Aaron Burr, a soldier by nature, a lawyer from necessity, was the same man at the bar as he had been in the field, and conducted a suit precisely on the principles which he had applied to the capture of a fort, and the defense of the Westchester lines.

Lawyers may, perhaps, be divided into three classes. To the first belong the great souls, who love justice, and who love law as the means by which justice is done. Of such lawyers, few everywhere, the American bar can boast, at least, its fair proportion. The second class comprises the majority of practitioners, whose single consideration it is to serve their clients by all the means which the bar stamps legitimate. If they triumph, it is well, whether justice triumphs with them or not, whether their triumph is due to a recognized legal trick, or to a right interpretation of the law. The third class are simply unscrupulous. They hang upon the outskirts of the profession and prey upon its offal. It is their trade to assist, to protect, and to deliver villains. To be a lawyer of the first description, and to excel in it, demands a broad, comprehensive, noble UNDERSTANDING. The second class requires a quick, acute intellect, tact, adroitness, self-possession, and great physical stamina, together with a certain moral obtuseness, which enables a man to do in his professional, what he would not do in his private capacity. The third kind of lawyer is merely a scoundrel, cunning enough to obtain the rewards of crime without incurring its risks.

To a place among the greatest lawyers, Aaron Burr has no title. He had not weight of metal enough for that. He was a light person; tough, elastic, polished, penetrating, a perfect rapier, not a broadsword; successful, while he did rapier's work, failing when a heavier blade was needed in his place. As a lawyer of the second grade, *as a mere practitioner at the*

bar, I presume his equal never lived. In his hands, the law was a whole armory of weapons, in the use of which, as weapons, his daring was only equaled by his skill.

In preparing his causes for trial, he was simply indefatigable. While there was an authority to be examined, while there was evidence to be procured, while there was an expedient to be devised, his efforts were never relaxed. And he gave no rest to his adversary, pursuing him with notices, motions, and appeals, improving every advantage, and exhausting all the means of annoyance; until, from very weariness and despair, sometimes, the enemy has capitulated. Colonel Burr not only labored himself to the uttermost of the powers of man, but he had the art of exacting from his assistants an equal diligence. There was no resisting his requirements. Assistant-counsel would receive notes from him at midnight, when they were asleep, demanding instant replies, which obliged the drowsy men of law to refer to authorities and examine papers. On the day of trial, he had his evidence, arguments, and authorities, marshaled in impenetrable array. Every possibility had been provided for. No man at the bar could ever boast of discovering a flaw in his preparation, or of carrying a point against him by surprise.

Where no amount of legitimate preparation would avail, he had no scruples to employing a legal *ruse*. Indeed he delighted to *surprise* his adversary, to lay an ambuscade for him, and carry a case by an ingenious stroke before the other side could recover their self-possession. It is related, that, in an ejectment suit to recover a valuable house in New York, the opposing counsel had expended their whole strength in proving the genuineness of a will, supposing, of course, that that was the only point susceptible of dispute. What was their surprise to find, that Burr's main attack was against the authenticity of an ancient deed, one of the links in the title, which, having never before been disputed, had been provided with merely formal proof! The jury pronounced the deed a forgery, and Burr's client lived and died in possession of the property. Two courts have since pronounced the deed authentic.

No means were too trival for him to employ, if he thought

them likely to promote his purpose. He used to say that he had once saved a man from being hanged by a certain arrangement of the candles in a court room. He referred to a trial for murder, in which both Hamilton and himself defended the prisoner, and which excited intense interest at the time. At first, the evidence against the prisoner seemed conclusive, and, I think, Burr himself thought him guilty. But as the trial proceeded, suspicions arose against the principal witness. Colonel Burr subjected him to a relentless cross-examination, and he became convinced that the guilt lay between the witness and the prisoner, with the balance of probability against the witness.

The man's appearance and bearing were most unprepossessing. Besides being remarkably ugly, he had the mean, *down* look, which is associated with the timidity of guilt. Hamilton had addressed the jury with his usual fluent eloquence, confining his remarks to the vindication of the prisoner, without alluding to the probable guilt of the witness. The prosecuting attorney replied, and it was now Burr's province to say the last word for the prisoner. But the day had worn away, and the court took a recess till candle light. This was extremely annoying to Colonel Burr, as he meditated enacting a little scene, to the success of which a strong light was indispensable. He was not to be balked, however. Through one of his satellites, of whom he always had several revolving around him, he caused an extra number of candles to be brought into the court-room, and to be so arranged as to throw a strong light upon a certain pillar, in full view of the jury, against which the suspected witness had leaned throughout the trial. The court assembled, the man resumed his accustomed place, and Colonel Burr rose. With the clear conciseness of which he was master, he set forth the facts which bore against the man, and then, seizing two candelabras from the table, he held them up toward him, throwing a glare of light upon his face, and exclaimed,

"Behold the murderer, gentlemen!"

Every eye was turned upon the wretch's ghastly countenance, which, to the excited multitude, seemed to wear the

very expression of a convicted murderer. The man reeled, as though he had been struck; then shrunk away behind the crowd, and rushed from the room. The effect of this incident was decisive. Colonel Burr concluded his speech, the judge charged, the jury gave a verdict of acquittal, and the prisoner was free.

A ruse which he once played on General Hamilton, Burr related to a legal friend, who told it to me. It occurred early in his practice at the New York bar, when he and Hamilton were in the first flush of success, and neither was disposed to concede superiority to the other. Both were engaged, for the first time, on the same side of an important cause, and it was a question which of the two should first address the jury. The etiquette of the bar assigns the closing speech to the leader of a cause, but it was not clear in this case who was the leader. Hamilton, who was certainly not an excessively modest man, hinted, in a rather ungracious manner, as Burr thought, that his friend Colonel Burr would open the argument. With that imperturbable politeness that never forsook him, Burr assented to the arrangement without a word of objection. He was nettled, however, and hit upon a little scheme of harmless revenge. He knew well the character of Hamilton's mind, and, from repeated conversations with him on the cause in which they were engaged, he knew every point which Hamilton would be likely to make in his speech. Burr prepared himself with great care. When he came at length to address the jury, besides using his own arguments, he anticipated all of Hamilton's. He absolutely exhausted the case. There was nothing left for Hamilton to advance. The consequence was that that gentleman appeared to much less advantage than usual, and never afterward exhibited an undue desire to assume the place of honor in suits which he conducted conjointly with Colonel Burr.

A few of Burr's maxims respecting the practice of the law have been preserved. His sarcastic definition of law, as dealt out by courts, has been often quoted to his disadvantage. "Law," said he, "is whatever is boldly asserted and plausibly maintained." Whether the sarcasm is, or was deserved, let

lawyers decide. Another of his sayings related to the management of a case, after the enemy had proposed to capitulate. Until that point was reached, he was for giving them no rest. But when a proposition for compromise had been received, he would say, "Now move slowly, never negotiate in a hurry." But the best of all his observations, at least, the most striking and novel, was the following: "There is a maxim," said he, "'Never put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day.' This is a maxim for sluggards. A better reading of it is, *Never do to-day what you can as well do to-morrow;* because something may occur to make you regret your premature action." He used also, to say, that the art of using men consisted in placing each in the position he was best fitted for; a version of the recent phrase, "The right man for the right place."

He showed unequaled tact himself in placing his men. Before selecting his assistants in a cause, he would ascertain and carefully calculate all the opposing influences—prejudice, interest, indifference, ignorance, political, local, and family feeling—and choose the men likeliest to combat them with effect. If there was a *crank* in the mind of a judge, he would find the hand that could turn it to his advantage. If there was a prejudice in the mind of a jury, he would contrive, by some means, to bring it to bear in favor of his client. If learning and eloquence were essential, he would enlist their aid also. But his forte was in playing upon the amiable weaknesses of human nature. Above these, the great man lifts his hearers; for the time, *makes* them noble and reasonable; and while they are so, convinces them. To Aaron Burr this majestic kind of mastery over men was not given.

As in the battle-field, so in the crises of a suit, his composure was perfect. The most unexpected event could not startle him. One day, as he and two other lawyers were arguing, in the court of chancery, a case in which he appeared for a very intimate friend of many years' standing, and in which he himself had an interest, a letter was handed him by a messenger. Apologizing, and requesting the lawyers to proceed in

their debate, he opened the letter, read it carefully, and then, quite in his usual manner, refolded it, and laid it on the table with the address downward. The discussion proceeded for about ten minutes longer. Colonel Burr listened with his usual attention, and, when a pause occurred, asked in his gentlest and quietest tone, as if merely to solve a legal doubt which had casually risen in his mind, "What effect would the death of my client have on the suit?" The lawyers started, and eagerly inquired his reason for asking. "He is dead," replied Burr, "as I learn from this letter; will the suit abate?"

From the strictness of his practice, he has been called a legal martinet. He asked no favors, and granted none. He defied an opponent to catch *him* tripping, and he never failed to subject his opponent's argument to just such treatment as he had taken infinite pains to guard his own against. So fond was he of the technicalities of the law, that occasionally he indulged in them to the detriment of his client. At the same time, no man was more observant of the proper courtesies of the bar; like a true knight, all complaisance, till the lists were joined, and the signal given for the fight; then the time had come for hard blows and rapid thrusts.

Burr valued himself little upon his oratorical powers, and he used to say that he had seldom spoken with pleasure or satisfaction to himself. His pleadings at the bar were more in the style of conversation than oratory, it is said; the conversation, however, of a well-bred, thoroughly-informed man of the world. He never declaimed. He was never diffuse; a long speech he never delivered in his life. In concise, precise, and, therefore, simple language, he contrived to clothe the essential points of his argument, and to lodge them in the mind of judge and jury so firmly that no bursts of eloquence from the other side could remove them. There was a vein of quiet sarcasm in some of his speeches, which, it is said, was exceedingly effective. With a manner always serious, he occasionally rose to be impressive, and produced effects upon the minds of his hearers that were long remembered. It is certain, from the writings of the time, that he was regarded as

a great speaker; as great in his way as General Hamilton was in his; and it was said that the extremely interesting character of Burr's speeches, no less than their conciseness, made it difficult to report them. The courtliness of his manner, the air of perfect breeding that invested him, and the singular composure of his bearing, all contributed, doubtless, to the effect of his public addresses. From the traditions still preserved in old Presbyterian families respecting the eloquence of President Burr, I infer that the son's style of speaking was extremely like that of the father.

To Alexander Hamilton, his friend and rival, Colonel Burr freely conceded the palm of eloquence. He did justice to the powers of that able man, with whom he contended for the honors of his profession and the prizes of public life, for twenty years. To the strength and fertility of Hamilton's imagination, to his fine rhetorical powers, to his occasional flashes of poetical genius, and to the force of his declamation, Colonel Burr paid the tribute of admiration. The two men were antagonists by nature; but, during these happy years, each had a high, if not an exaggerated opinion of the other's talents.

An aged member of the bar described to me the manner of the two men in their public addresses. Hamilton's way was to *exhaust* a case; giving ample statement to every point; anticipating every objection; saying every thing that could fairly be said in the fullest manner. He would speak for two or three hours, enchaining the attention of court and jury by his fluent and, sometimes, lofty eloquence. Burr, in replying, would select two or three vulnerable, yet vital points of Hamilton's speech, and quietly demolish them, and leave all the other parts of his oration untouched. In a twenty minutes' speech, he has been known completely to neutralize the effect of one of Hamilton's elaborate and ornate addresses. Burr began practice upon the principle of never undertaking a cause which he did not feel sure of gaining; and I am assured by another venerable lawyer of this city, who was frequently engaged with Burr, that he never in his life lost a case which he personally conducted. It is, at least, certain,

that he gained over Hamilton some signal and unexpected triumphs.*

On his arrival in New York, Colonel Burr seems, at once, to have taken his place among the leaders of the bar, and he retained that position for nearly a quarter of a century, though, during that period, the bar of New York trebled its numbers. With the single exception of Hamilton, no lawyer in the State held so high a position as he, and none in the country held a higher.

With regard to the income derivable from the practice of the law at that time, it is difficult to obtain information. At the present day, a lawyer is considered to be in good practice who has a clear gain of four thousand dollars a year. Ten thousand dollars is thought a very large revenue: it is questionable if there are one hundred lawyers in the United States who earn so much. An *average* income of twenty thousand is as great as the half dozen leading lawyers of the country can boast; though, occasionally, a lawyer will make that sum by a single case, or even twice as much. In early times, professional incomes could scarcely have been as large as they are now. Among the letters of Alexander Hamilton there is one from a New York merchant, retaining the services of Hamilton in any suits the merchant might have for five years. Inclosed in the letter was a note for a thousand dollars, payable at the end of the five years, with interest at five per cent.

* General Erastus Root, who was well acquainted with Burr in the height of his celebrity, was with him in the Assembly and in Congress, and often heard him speak in the courts, gives the following opinion of the powers of the two men: "As a lawyer and as a scholar Burr was not inferior to Hamilton. His reasoning powers were at least equal. Their *modes* of argument were very different. Hamilton was very diffuse and wordy. His words were so well chosen, and his sentences so finely formed into a swelling current, that the hearer would be captivated. The listener would admire, if he was not convinced. Burr's arguments were generally methodized and compact. I used to say of them, when they were rivals at the bar, that Burr would say as much in half an hour as Hamilton in two hours. Burr was terse and convincing, while Hamilton was flowing and rapturous. They were much the greatest men in this State, and perhaps the greatest men in the United States."—*Hammond's History of Political Parties in the State of New York.*

Upon the letter is an indorsement, in Hamilton's hand, to the effect that the note had been "*returned, as being too much.*" Certainly the present leaders of the New York bar would not take so modest a view of the value of their services. William Wirt, of Virginia, a very brilliant and successful lawyer, practicing in the dominant State of the Union, mentions, that in 1802, he had an income of twelve hundred pounds a year. A few years later, while passing through New York to try a cause in Boston, he visited some of the New York courts, and inquired respecting the fees of the lawyers. He was astonished at their *smallness*, and said a Virginia lawyer would starve on such fees. From such indications as these, it is perhaps safe to infer that Hamilton and Burr may have had professional incomes of ten thousand dollars a year, but not more, on an average. Burr used to say that he had made forty thousand dollars from one cause, but whether it was as a lawyer or a speculator that he gained so much, is not clear. Speculation in lands was much the rage among the leading men of the country during the first twenty years after the Revolution, and no one was fonder of that fascinating game than Burr. Frequently he united, in his land transactions, the characters of lawyer and of speculator, receiving lands in payment for professional services, and then disposing of them to the best advantage he could.

His style of living kept pace with his increasing income. In a few years we find him master of Richmond Hill, the mansion where Washington had lived in 1776, with grounds reaching to the Hudson, with ample gardens, and a considerable extent of grove and farm. Here he maintained a liberal establishment, and exercised the hospitality which was then in vogue. Talleyrand, Volney, Louis Philippe, and other strangers of distinction, whom the French Revolution drove into exile, were entertained with princely profusion and elegance at Richmond Hill. With Talleyrand and Volney, Burr became particularly intimate. The one particular in which Richmond Hill surpassed the other houses of equal pretensions, was its library. From his college days, Colonel Burr had been a zealous buyer of books, and his stock had gone on increasing

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till, on attaining to the dignity of householder, he was able to give to his miscellaneous collection something of the completeness of a library. It was customary then for gentlemen to have accounts with booksellers in London, and the arrival of the English packet was an event of interest to persons of taste from the literary treasures it usually brought. Colonel Burr was one of those who had their London bookseller ; to whom he was an excellent customer. It is evident enough, from his correspondence, that his favorite authors were still those whom the "well-constituted minds" of that day regarded with admiring horror. The volumes of Gibbon's History were appearing in those years, striking the orthodox world with wonder and dismay. They had a very hearty welcome in the circle at Richmond Hill. Colonel Burr read them, and often, while absent from home at some distant court, reminds his wife of their excellence, and urges her to study them with care. Indeed, Gibbon was an author quite after Aaron Burr's own heart.

Another name of horror, a few years later, was William Godwin (Charles Lamb's friend), the most amiable of the human species, and, one would *now* suppose, the most harmless. He was one of those lovers of his kind who believe in man as saints once believed in God. A passionate lover of justice, a passionate hater of wrong, he waged a well-meant, ineffectual warfare against the State of Things. He held opinions respecting the Rights of Woman, Marriage and Divorce, and the Administration of Justice, which are peculiarly obnoxious to persons of a conservative cast of character. Burr liked this man and his writings. In one of the letters in which Hamilton recounts the enormities of Burr, he says, by way of climax, that he had heard him talk *rank Godwinism!* Of Mary Wolstoncroft, the wife of William Godwin, Burr had an exquisite portrait among his few pictures.

Jeremy Bentham was another of his favorites. At a time when the mere name of the great Apostle of Utilitarianism was known only to half a dozen of the most intelligent minds on this side of the Atlantic, Colonel Burr was a reader of his works, and conceived for their author the highest opinion.

Benthamism has had its day; it only excites wonder in us now that so estimable a man should have found delight in such dreary doctrine; but it is certain that to be a reader of Bentham during the period now under consideration, was to be a partaker of the most advanced thought of the time. Benthamism was, as a great critic has remarked, "a *determinate being*, what all the world, in a cowardly, half-and-half manner, was tending to be." "An eyeless heroism," the same writer styles it. Along with Burr, Albert Gallatin was a lover of Bentham; and it is likely enough that Burr derived his first knowledge of Bentham through Gallatin.

The "Edinburg Review," Scott's early poems, the Mackenzie's and Miss Burnett's novels, in a word, all the attractive literature of the day, found its way, very soon after publication, to Richmond Hill.

What happy years were those which Colonel Burr passed in the practice of the law in New York, before he was drawn into the political vortex! His wife was full of affection and helpfulness, making him the happiest of men while he was at home, and superintending, with wise vigilance, his office and his household when he was abroad. Her two sons were students at law in Colonel Burr's office, and aided him most essentially in the prosecution of his business. One of them frequently accompanied him on his journeys as an amanuensis and clerk, while the other represented him in the office in New York. Little Theodosia, a lovely, rosy-cheeked child, all grace and intelligence, was the delight of the household. The letters that passed between Colonel Burr and his wife, after they had been several years married, read like the passionate outpourings of Italian lovers in the first month of their betrothal.

Once, in telling him of the safe arrival of a packet of his letters, she draws an enchanting picture of a happy home. It was just before dinner, she says, when the letters arrived, and the children were dispersed at various employments. "I furnished the mantelpiece with the contents of the packet. When dinner was served up they were called. You know the usual eagerness on this occasion. They were all seated but Bartow,

when he espied the letters; the surprise, the joy, the exclamations exceed description. The greatest stoic would have forgot himself. A silent tear betrayed me no *philosopher*. A most joyous repast succeeded. We talked of our happiness, of our first of blessings, our best of papas. I enjoyed, my Aaron, the only happiness that could accrue from your absence. It was a momentary compensation; the only one I ever experienced." Then she tells him how happy his letter had made her. "Your letters," she adds, "always afford me a singular satisfaction; a sensation entirely my own; this was peculiarly so. It wrought strangely on my mind and spirits. My Aaron, it was replete with tenderness! with the most lively affection. I read and re-read, till afraid I should get it by rote, and mingle it with common ideas. Profane the sacred pledge! No; it shall not be. I will economize the boon."

In another letter she describes the inane behavior of some foolish guests with whom the family had been bored, and tells him how rejoiced she was to observe that the children all had sense enough to despise them. "I really believe, my dear," she proceeds, "that few parents can boast of children whose minds are so prone to virtue. I see the reward of our assiduity with inexpressible delight, with a gratitude few experience. My Aaron, they have grateful hearts; some circumstances prove it, which I shall relate to you with singular pleasure at your return."

Another passage, acknowledging the arrival of letters, is very remarkable. It was written when they had been five years married. "What language," she exclaims, "can express the joy, the gratitude of Theodosia? Stage after stage without a line. Thy usual punctuality gave room for every fear; various conjectures filled every breast. One of our sons was to have departed to-morrow in quest of the best of friends and fathers. This morning we waited the stage with impatience. Shrouder went frequently before it arrived; at length returned—*no letter*. We were struck dumb with disappointment. Bartow set out to inquire who were the passengers; in a very few minutes returned exulting—a packet worth the treasures of the universe. Joy brightened every face; all

expressed their past anxieties; their present happiness. To enjoy was the first result. Each made choice of what they could best relish. Porter, sweet wine, chocolate, and sweetmeats made the most delightful repast that could be shared without thee. The servants were made to feel *their lord was well*, are at this instant toasting his health and bounty; while the boys are obeying thy dear commands, thy Theodosia flies to speak her heartfelt joys:—her Aaron safe, mistress of the heart she adores; can she ask more? has Heaven more to grant?"

Her letters are not all in this ecstatic strain. She talks of business, of books, of passing events. Catharine of Russia was then filling the world with the noise of her exploits. Mrs. Burr writes: "The Empress of Russia is as successful as I wish her. What a glorious figure will she make on the historical page! Can you form an idea of a more happy mortal than she will be when seated on the throne of Constantinople? How her ambition will be gratified; the opposition and threats of Great Britain will increase her triumph. I wish I had wit and importance enough to write her a congratulatory letter. The ladies should deify her, and consecrate a temple to her praise. It is a diverting thought that the mighty Emperor of the Turks should be subdued by a woman. How enviable that she alone should be the avenger of her sex's wrongs for so many ages past. She seems to have awakened Justice, who appears to be a sleepy dame in the cause of injured innocence."

Colonel Burr's replies to these warm epistles are couched in the language of sincere and joyous love. Before the marriage there was a certain peremptoriness of tone in his letters to her, not usual, and not quite pleasing, in the letters of a lover. His letters after marriage were more tender, without being less considerate. A few sentences will suffice to give an idea of their usual manner.

The following is perfectly characteristic: "This morning came your kind, your affectionate, your truly welcome letter of Monday evening. Where did it loiter so long? Nothing in my absence is so flatterng to me as your health and cheer-

fulness. I then contemplate nothing so eagerly as my return; amuse myself with ideas of my own happiness, and dwell on the sweet domestic joys which I fancy prepared for me. Nothing is so unfriendly to every species of enjoyment as melancholy. Gloom, however dressed, however caused, is incompatible with friendship. They can not have place in the mind at the same time. It is the secret, the malignant foe of sentiment and love."

He writes much respecting the children. "The letters of our dear children are a feast. Every part of them is pleasing and interesting. * * * To hear that they are employed, that no time is absolutely wasted, is the most flattering of any thing that can be told me of them. It insures their affection, or is the best evidence of it. It insures, in its consequences, every thing I am ambitious of in them. Endeavor to preserve regularity of hours; it conduces exceedingly to industry. * * * My love to the smiling little girl. I received her letter, but not the pretty things. I continually plan my return with childish impatience, and fancy a thousand incidents which render it more interesting."

Going to Albany was a serious undertaking in those days. From Albany, on one occasion, he writes: "The headache with which I left New York grew so extreme, that, finding it impossible to proceed in the stage, the view of a vessel off Tarrytown, under full sail before the wind, tempted me to go on board. We reached West Point that night, and lay there at anchor near three days. After a variety of changes from sloop to wagon, from wagon to canoe, and from canoe to sloop again, I reached this place last evening. I was able, however, to land at Rhinebeck on Thursday evening, and there wrote you a letter."

One of Colonel Burr's letters to his wife, written in the seventh year of their married life, gives us an idea of the playful badinage for which his conversation was remarkable, but which appears unfrequently in his letters. He had had some thoughts of buying a romantic spot, called Fort Johnson, desirable, also, as property. She, it appears, was not in favor of the purchase, and advised him not even to revisit the lovely

scene, lest he should be tempted to buy it. But he did visit it, and wrote her a very pleasant, and humorous account of the result:

"O Theo.! there is the most delightful grove—so darkened with *weeping willows*, that at noonday a *susceptible* fancy like yours would mistake it for a bewitching moonlight evening. These sympathizing willows, too, exclude even the prying eye of curiosity. Here no rude noise interrupts the softest whisper. Here no harsher sound is heard than the wild cooings of the gentle dove, the gay thrasher's animated warbles, and the soft murmurs of the passing brook. Really, Theo., it is *charming*.

"I should have told you that I am speaking of Fort Johnson, where I have spent a day. From this *amiable* bower you ascend a gentle declivity, by a winding path, to a cluster of lofty oaks and locusts. Here nature assumes a more august appearance. The gentle brook, which murmured soft below, here bursts a cataract. Here you behold the stately Mohawk roll his majestic wave along the lofty Apalachians. Here the mind assumes a nobler tone, and is occupied by sublimer objects. What *there* was tenderness, *here* swells to rapture. It is truly *charming*.

"The windings of this enchanting brook form a lovely island, variegated by the most sportive hand of nature. This shall be yours. We will plant it with jasmins and woodbine, and call it Cyprus. It seems formed for the residence of the loves and the graces, and is therefore yours by the best of titles. It is indeed most *charming*.

"But I could fill sheets in description of the beauties of this romantic place. We will reserve it for the subject of many an amusing hour. And besides being little in the habit of the sublime or poetical, I grow already out of breath, and begin to falter, as you perceive. I can not, however, omit the most interesting and important circumstance; one which I had rather communicate to you in this way than face to face. I know that you was opposed to this journey to Fort Johnson. It is, therefore, with the greatest regret that I communicate

the event; and you are not unacquainted with my inducements to it.

"In many things I am indeed unhappy in possessing a singularity of taste; particularly unhappy when that taste differs in any thing from yours. But we can not control necessity, though we often persuade ourselves that certain things are our choice, when in truth we have been unavoidably impelled to them. In the instance I am going to relate, I shall not examine whether I have been governed by mere fancy, or by motives of expediency, or by caprice; you will probably say the latter.

"My dear Theo., arm yourself with all your fortitude. I know you have much of it, and I hope that upon this occasion you will not fail to exercise it. I abhor preface and preamble, and don't know why I have now used it so freely. But I am well aware that what I am going to relate needs much apology *from* me, and will need much *to* you. If I am the unwilling, the unfortunate instrument of depriving you of any part of your promised gayety or pleasure, I hope you are too generous to aggravate the misfortune by upbraiding me with it. Be assured (I hope the assurance is needless), that whatever diminishes your happiness equally impairs mine. In short, then, for I grow tedious both to you and myself; and to procrastinate the relation of disagreeable events only gives them poignancy; in short, then, my dear Theo., the beauty of this same Fort Johnson, the fertility of the soil, the commodiousness and elegance of the buildings, the great value of the mills, and the very inconsiderable price which was asked for the whole, have *not* induced me to purchase it, and probably never will: in the confidence, however, of meeting your forgiveness. I am, etc., etc."

One who reads this warm and tender correspondence receives the impression that it gushed from hearts that confided in one another, and that were worthy one another's confidence. It was a very happy family. Parents, children, servants, seemed all to have delighted in one another, and to have been animated by a common desire for the happiness of the whole circle. To his two step-sons, Colonel Burr was liberal in the

extreme, and took the liveliest possible interest in their advancement. The little Theodosia was now beginning her education, every step of which was thoughtfully superintended by her father. From her earliest years, she began to manifest a singular, almost morbid fondness for her father, who, on his part, was resolved that she should be peerless among the ladies of her time. *Courage* and *fortitude* were his darling virtues. He began to teach his daughter these, at an age when most parents are teaching their children effeminacy. He would encourage her to go alone in the dark, to the least frequented parts of his large rambling house, and to sleep in a room by herself. He urged her to restrain her cries when she was hurt, and to overcome her appetite for injurious delicacies. To such an extent did he carry discipline of this kind, that visitors sometimes received the impression that he was a hard, unloving father; as people will of those rare parents who prefer to promote the lasting good of their children, even at the expense of their present pleasure. The servants of the family, most of whom were slaves, were taught to read.

In these years, there was not a spot upon the brightness of his good name. A rising lawyer, devoted to business, avoiding politics, happy at home, honored abroad, welcome in the most refined and elevated circles, and shining in them with all the luster of a striking person, graceful manners and a polished wit—who would have predicted for him any thing but a career of still increasing brilliancy, a whole life-time of honorable exertion, and a name that would have been distinction to all who bore, or should inherit it?

True, a discerning person, a *man* who should have seen him much, and observed him closely, would have noted that in much of his intercourse with others, there was a flavor of falsehood. Women he always flattered. He did it on principle. He said their ruling passion was vanity, which, he always maintained, was a harmless and amiable failing. He flattered them with an adroitness seldom equaled, contriving always to praise those qualities, upon the fancied possession of which they most valued *themselves;* which is, of all flattery, the most irresistible. But this habit was, by no means, altogether insincere

with Colonel Burr. He really liked women, and all their lovely ways, and had a great opinion of their taste and capacity. He preferred their society to that of men, at all periods of life—which is not a good sign. And women, with scarcely one exception in all his life, were warmly his friends—which is not an infallibly good sign. The men whom *men* respect, the women whom *women* approve, are the men and women who bless their species.

Burr's intercourse with men, too, was not always characterized by the heartiness and directness which are dear to the Saxon heart. He succeeded best with young men and with unsophisticated elderly gentlemen. He had a rare faculty of inspiring young men with his own ambition, and with his own contempt of danger, luxury, and ease. Many young men loved him almost with the love of woman, and made him their model, and succeeded in copying his virtues and his faults. He, on his part, was really attached to them, would take infinite pains to form and advance them; and succeeded in so imprinting his own character on theirs, that their career in life was like his—glorious at the beginning, disastrous, if not disgraceful, at the close.

The same discerning observer would have lamented Colonel Burr's carelessness with regard to money. He was excessively given to making presents, to making expensive additions to his house and grounds. His hospitality was sometimes profuse in the extreme. Once, while a certain Major Prevost was gone to England, his whole family of young children were entertained at Colonel Burr's house. There was not that instinctive counting of the cost which marks the character destined to live and die in prosperity. And, still worse, there was not that instinctive shrinking from debt, that caution not to incur obligations respecting the punctual discharge of which there is any reasonable doubt, which indicates the entirely honest man. At this period, however, this cardinal fault had not exhibited itself to a degree approaching immorality. Profuseness of expenditure was then, as now, the prevalent vice of New York, and in conforming to the bad custom Col-

onel Burr did only what most of his neighbors did. Hamilton himself, after fifteen years' successful practice of the law in the same courts with Burr, died scarcely solvent. Rufus King, General Knox, Jefferson, and many other public men of the period, were bad managers of their private interests, and were often in pecuniary straits.

CHAPTER XI.

THE NEW YORK POLITICIAN.

The Rapidity of his Rise in Politics — Member of the State Legislature — Opposes the Mechanics' Bill — Votes for the Abolition of Slavery — Parties after the Peace — The Great Families of the State — "Burr's Myrmidons" — The Ratification of the Constitution — Burr's Early Movements in Politics — Appointed Attorney-General of the State — His Report on the Revolutionary Claims — Sale of the State Lands — Elected to the Senate of the United States.

Colonel Burr's rise to eminence in the political world was more rapid than that of any other man who has played a conspicuous part in the affairs of the United States. Over the heads of tried and able politicians, in a State where leading families had, for a century, nearly monopolized the offices of honor and emolument, he was advanced, in four years after fairly entering the political arena, from a private station, first to the highest honor of the bar, next, to a seat in the national councils, and then, to a competition with Washington, Adams, Jefferson, and Clinton for the presidency itself. This point he reached when he was but thirty-six years of age, without having originated any political idea or measure, without being fully committed to either of the two leading parties.

To his cotemporaries, no less than to recent writers of political history, the suddenness of his elevation was an enigma. John Adams thought it was owing to the prestige of his father's and grandfather's name. Hamilton attributed it to Burr's unequaled wire-pulling. Some thought it was his military reputation. Others called it luck. His own circle of friends regarded his elevation as the legitimate result of a superiority to most of his rivals in knowledge, culture, and talents. No doubt *all* of these were causes of his success. Perhaps some of the mystery will vanish before a concise statement of his political career.

Late in the autumn of 1783, Colonel Burr, as we have seen, became a resident of the city of New York. In the spring of 1784 he was elected a member of the legislature, and on the 12th of October following, took his seat. During the first session, he was not a diligent, nor, as it would seem, a prominent member; attending only when important votes were taken, and leaving the burden of legilsation to members of more leisure than himself. But, at the second session, he took a stand on a certain bill which made him at once the most conspicuous of the members, and an object, out of doors, of equal hatred and admiration.

A company of mechanics applied for an act of incorporation, by which they would be enabled to hold land to an unlimited extent, and to wield power which, Colonel Burr thought, would finally endanger the independence of the city government. A great and wealthy GUILD, unless limits were fixed to its growth and authority, would arise, he said, to direct the votes of the most numerous class in the community, and thus to overawe the government. Alone, among the members from the city, he opposed this bill. His course created an intense excitement among the mechanics, some of whom threatened violence against his person and property; thus creating the circumstances in which, of all others, Aaron Burr was most fitted to shine. To danger he was constitutionally insensible. He stood firm in his opposition. When his friends offered to protect his house from assault, he adroitly said that he had no fear of violence from men of the Revolution, who had just made such sacrifices to conquer the right of governing themselves; and that, whatever might occur, he was able and prepared to protect himself. The bill passed; but was returned from the Council of Revision with Colonel Burr's objections, and was, therefore, lost. The citizens generally sided with Burr, and the mechanics themselves, it is said, were, at least, so far convinced of the correctness of his views as never to renew the application.

Conduct like this, in a young and rising lawyer, popular already for his gallantry as a soldier, could not but add to his reputation for courage, a general confidence in his firmness and

address. It was calculated to win him friends among his legislative associates, among the propertied citizens, and among the very class whose wishes he had opposed, who are not apt to like a man the less for boldly and courteously setting them right. It must also be borne in mind that a town of thirty thousand inhabitants is a theater upon which a shining action does not escape observation.

At the same session, a bill was introduced into the legislature for the gradual abolition of slavery in the State. Burr was in favor of a speedier extinction of the anomaly, and moved to amend the bill so as to totally abolish slavery after a certain day. His amendment having been rejected, he voted for the original bill, which was lost.

Then followed three years of political calm in the State of New York, during which the name of Aaron Burr does not appear in politics.

During the period that elapsed between the conclusion of peace in 1783, and the formation of the Constitution in 1787, the question upon which parties in this State were divided was this: What are the rights of the *Tories* in this commonwealth? Shall we Whigs, triumphant over them after a seven years' contest, regard them as defeated enemies or as mistaken fellow-citizens? Shall the animosities and disabilities of the war be kept up and cherished, or shall the victors magnanimously let bygones be bygones?

In this controversy, there were three parties.

First, the Tories themselves, some of whom were blind enough to think that England, after breathing awhile, would attempt, and successfully too, to regain her colonies, the lost jewels of her diadem. Others, less infatuated, hoped, that after the first soreness of the war was over, the Tories would enjoy in the State the preëminence they had had in the colony Others, disfranchised for their active hostility to the Revolution, were humble suitors for a restoration to estates and employment. All of these were, of course, for granting the Tories all the rights and privileges of citizenship.

Secondly, the Whigs, who had borne the burdens and hardships of the war; many of whom had lost fortune, health, re-

lations, friends, in the struggle; all of whom having seen that struggle prolonged and embittered by Tory machinations, had learned to hate a Tory worse than a British soldier. These men were indignant at the idea of conceding any thing to Tories. They demanded to enjoy the fruits of their triumph without sharing them with the enemy.

Thirdly, between these extreme parties, there was, as usual, a class of people who were in favor of making some concessions to the Tories, and of gradually restoring all who would profess loyalty to the new order of things, to equal privileges with the Whigs.

Colonel Burr was a Whig of the decided school, one of those who were called violent Whigs. This was the popular party of that day. That he took an open and active part in the discussion of the various Whig and Tory questions, does not appear, but he was *classed* with the extreme Whigs, and acted afterward, and on other questions, with that party.

As there were three parties, so there were three groups of leading partizans.

There were, first, the *Clintons*, of whom George Clinton, Governor of the State, was the important person. He was the undisputed leader of the popular party. He had been governor since 1777, and was re-elected, every other year, to that office, for eighteen years. The Clintons, as a family, were not, at this time, either numerous or rich; but George Clinton, an able, tough, wary, self-willed man, wielding, with unusual tact, the entire patronage of the State, and dear to the affections of the great mass of the people, is an imposing figure in the politics of the time, and must ever be regarded as the Chief Man of the State of New York, during the earlier years of its independent existence. De Witt Clinton, a nephew of the governor, was a student in Columbia College at this time. The Clintons were all strong characters, retaining something of the fiery, obstinate, north-of-Ireland disposition which their ancestor brought with him from over the sea, in 1719. They were thorough Whigs, all of them, though, it was said, the founder of the family was a royalist in the time of Charles I., and fled to Ireland to avoid the enmity of the Roundheads.

Then there were the *Schuylers*, with General Schuyler at their head, and Alexander Hamilton, his son-in-law, for ornament and champion. General Schuyler was formed for unpopularity. Rich, of an imposing presence, austere in manners, a very honest, worthy man, he had no real sympathy with the age and country in which he lived. No more had Hamilton, as Hamilton well knew, and bitterly confessed. But not to anticipate, it is enough here to say that the Schuyler party, as used and led by Alexander Hamilton, was the one most directly opposed to the Clintons. General Schuyler had been a competitor with George Clinton for the governorship in 1777, and his disappointment, it was thought, was still very fresh in the general's recollection.

But there was a third family in the State, which, merely as a family, was more important than the Clintons or Schuylers. This was the Livingston family—rich, numerous, and influential. At the time we are now considering, there were nine members of this family in public life—politicians, judges, clergymen, lawyers—of whom several were of national celebrity. And besides those who bore the name of Livingston, there were distinguished and aspiring men who had married daughters of the family. The Livingstons had been rooted in the State for more than a hundred years, and the circle of their connections embraced a great proportion of the leading people. Robert R. Livingston, a member of Congress in 1776, one of the committee who drew up the Declaration of Independence, a conspicuous framer of the Constitution, afterward its stanch supporter, in later years the patron of Robert Fulton, and therefore immortal, was at this period the head and pride of the Livingston family.

These were the three families. The Clintons had *power*, the Livingstons had *numbers*, the Schuylers had *Hamilton*. Neither of the three was strong enough to overcome the other two united, and any two united could triumph over the third.

Such statements as these must, of course, be taken with proper allowance. A thousand influences enter into politics, and general statements are only outline truths. Nevertheless,

in a State where only freeholders have a vote, and where there are not more than twelve or fourteen thousand freeholders, the influence of great families, if wielded by men of force and talent, will be, in the long run, and in great crises, controlling. It was so in the State of New York for twenty years after the Revolution.

For some years after coming to New York, Colonel Burr held aloof from these factions. Absorbed in the practice of his profession and the education of his family, he was not reckoned among the politicians. And when, at length, he entered the political field, it was not as an ally of either of the families, but as an independent power who profited by their dissensions, and wielded the influence of two to crush the more obnoxious third. He had a party of his own, that served him instead of family connections. Gradually certain young men of the town, who had nothing to hope from the ruling power, ambitious, like himself, were drawn into his circle, and inspired with his own energy and resolution. They were devoted to their chief, of whose abilities they had an extravagant opinion. In every quarter, they sounded the praises of the man who, they said, was the bravest soldier, the ablest lawyer, and the most accomplished gentleman of his day; endowed with equal valor and prudence; formed to shine in every scene, and to succeed in every enterprise. *Burr's myrmidons*, these young gentlemen were styled by General Hamilton. The *Tenth Legion*, they were proudly called by Theodosia, the daughter. They were not as numerous as the young lady's expression would imply, but they were such efficient co-workers with their chief, that the Burrites formed a fourth party in the State, and were a recognized power in it years after the leader had vanished from the scene. This party, as far as I can ascertain, was a merely personal one; its objects, victory and glory. Consisting at first of half a dozen of Burr's personal friends, it grew in numbers with his advancement, until, as just intimated, it became a formidable "wing" of the great Republican party.

During the summer of 1787, all minds were fixed upon the proceedings of the convention that was forming the Constitu-

tion under which we now live. The science of government never had such a thorough discussion as it then received at the hands of editors, pamphleteers, and way-side politicians. Shall we have a strong and splendid central government, reducing sovereign States to the rank of departments; or shall these sovereign States merely form a federal Union, for mutual defense? That was the question. In September, the Constitution, which was a compromise between the two systems, and which, therefore, was quite satisfactory to nobody, was submitted to the States for each to ratify or reject. How eagerly and how long, with what ability and learning, the question of ratification or rejection was discussed in this State, need not be recounted here. Governor Clinton, proud of the State he governed, and foreseeing its destiny, thought it was required by the new Constitution to concede too much to the central authority, and to throw away the magnificent advantages of its position. He led the party who opposed ratification. Hamilton, who may almost be called the author of the Constitution, was of course its ablest champion. Jay, Robert R. Livingston, General Schuyler, the Van Rensselaers, were all strenuous in its support, and it was the union of the Livingston influence with the Schuyler, on this great question, that added New York to the States that had accepted the Constitution. Robert R. Livingston, the reader is aware, was one of the framers of the instrument.

It is a significant fact that there should be no trace of Aaron Burr in a controversy so interesting and so vital as this. Mr. Davis says he was "neutral" on the question. Hamilton says his "conduct was equivocal." He was in no position that obliged him publicly to espouse either side of the question, and his was not the kind of intellect to shine in the pages of "The Federalist." His letters show, that while this subject was in agitation, he was immersed in law business. In common with most of the leading men of that time, including the framers of the Constitution, and particularly Hamilton, he had a low opinion of the merits of the new system, as a piece of political machinery. Conversing with a gentleman on the subject, toward the close of his life, he used language like this:

"When the Constitution was first framed," said he, "I predicted that it would not last fifty years. I was mistaken. It will evidently last longer than that. But I was mistaken only in point of *time*. The crash will *come*, but not quite as soon as I thought."

Though the New York Convention accepted the Constitution by a majority of only three members, in a House of fifty-seven, yet, after the question was disposed of, there was a powerful reäction in favor of the Federal party. The feeling was general that the Constitution must be supported, and fairly tried. In the city, the anti-Federalists, as a party, were almost annihilated, and it was many a year before they gained the ascendancy.

It was in the spring of 1788, when the Federal majority in the city was overwhelming, and in the State considerable, that Colonel Burr first appears in political history as the candidate of the anti-Federal party. On the walls of the city, in the month of April, appeared a handbill announcing to the shattered remnant of the popular party, that

"THE SONS OF LIBERTY, WHO ARE AGAIN CALLED UPON TO CONTEND WITH THE SHELTERED ALIENS, WHO HAVE, BY THE COURTESY OF OUR OWN COUNTRY, BEEN PERMITTED TO REMAIN AMONG US, WILL GIVE THEIR SUPPORT TO THE FOLLOWING TICKET: WILLIAM DEMING, MELANCTHON SMITH, MARINUS WILLET, AND AARON BURR."

With this nomination, I presume, Colonel Burr had little to do. The ticket was probably run merely to keep the party together. Yet, as after making every allowance that even charity requires, Colonel Burr's course as a politician can not be praised, it is only fair to bear in mind that when the popular party seemed hopelessly crushed, was the time when he first allowed his name to be identified with it.

The next year, 1789, there was an election for governor, and the victorious Federalists, under Hamilton, had hopes of ousting Governor Clinton, who was a candidate for reëlection. Clinton, however, was so rooted in the affections of the people, that Hamilton despaired of electing an opposition candidate by direct means. He therefore resorted to a maneuver,

which he would have eloquently denounced if it had been devised by Burr. Chief Justice Morris, it was generally supposed and desired, would have been the regular Federal candidate. But six weeks before the election, Hamilton called a meeting in New York of moderate men of both parties, who nominated, as the opposing candidate, Judge Yates, an anti-Federalist, but a man, it was thought, who would be supported by enough Federalists to accomplish Hamilton's object, the downfall of Clinton. Judge Yates was one of Burr's most intimate friends. When Colonel Burr was at Albany in 1782, endeavoring to conquer the opposition of the lawyers to his premature, irregular admission to the bar, Judge Yates rendered him essential service, which laid the foundation of a lasting and cordial friendship between them. On every political question since, Colonel Burr and Judge Yates had felt and acted together. With Governor Clinton he had no particular relations. In this movement, therefore, to elevate his old and venerated friend, Colonel Burr joined, and his name appears, with that of Hamilton, William Duer, and Robert Troup, as one of the committee of correspondence appointed to promote the object. Yates accepted, and Morris was induced to decline the nomination. The Federalists issued an address, in which with singular absurdity, they avow a *preference* for Morris, but a determination to *vote* for Yates, as Yates was the only man to beat Clinton with. The trick nearly succeeded. Clinton received 6,391 votes; Yates, 5,962: majority for Clinton, 429.

This is the only instance in which Hamilton and Burr ever acted in politics together. There is a tendency in human nature to heap obloquy upon a public man who is irretrievably *down;* and, accordingly, I find writers, who give an account of this election, attributing political inconsistency and maneuvering to Burr. On the contrary, it was Hamilton who was inconsistent, and who maneuvered. As yet Burr was no politician. Nothing was more natural or more proper than his support of an old friend, with whom he was in political accord.

Governor Clinton was evidently of that opinion, for, four

months after the election, he offered Burr the Attorney-Generalship of the State. This was a tribute to the lawyer merely. The office was important and lucrative, but it was not given, at that day, as a matter of course, to a partizan. For some days after the offer was made, Colonel Burr hesitated to accept it, not from any dislike to the office, as he informed the governor, but from other circumstances known to both, and therefore not mentioned. September 25th he signified his willingness to accept, and on the 27th he was appointed. It is conceded, I believe, by every one, that during the two years that Colonel Burr held this office, its duties were performed by him with punctilious correctness and efficiency.

In March, 1790, the Attorney-General was named one of three commissioners, upon whom the legislature devolved the duty of classifying and deciding upon the claims of individuals for services rendered and losses sustained in the revolutionary war. These claimants were numberless. Some of them had served in the State militia, some in the Continental army, and some in both. Others had supplied provisions to both descriptions of troops. Many had had their estates overrun, their houses pillaged or burnt by the foe. Some of the claims were for many thousands of dollars, others for the value of a few bushels of oats or tons of hay. Of course, in the throng of rightful claimaints mingled not a few rogues, whose accounts needed the closest scrutiny. And when the justice of a claim was established, it was often a difficult point to decide whether it was the general government, or the State government that ought to discharge it. In many cases both seemed liable, and the commissioners had to decide in what proportion. The investigation was continued at intervals for the period of two years, at the expiration of which the Attorney-General drew up a report, which was presented to the legislature, and accepted by that body without opposition or amendment. The report was chiefly remarkable for its clear and concise statement of the principles upon which claims had been allowed, rejected, or excluded from consideration. Those principles were made the basis of all future settlements with revolutionary creditors in this State, and Colonel Burr gained

much in reputation from the ability with which they were developed in the report.

The Attorney-General in 1791 was appointed to serve on another commission of great importance, the issue of which was not productive of reputation to any one.

The State, at this time, was in pressing need of money, and exceedingly rich in land. At the close of the war, there were seven millions of acres of land belonging to the State, that were still wild and waste. The magnificient and productive region now known as western New York, the garden of the northern States, was then a wilderness inhabited by Indians, and traversed only by Indian trails. Indeed the entire State of New York, except its southern extremity and the shores of the Hudson river, was in the same primeval condition. It was one of the great questions of State policy, from 1783 to 1791, how to get the wild lands sold and settled. Various laws had been passed to facilitate the object, but it had progressed with provoking slowness, until, in 1791, the State treasury being in extreme need of replenishment, and a whole army of creditors waiting only the award of the commissioners to present and press their claims, it was resolved to force the lands to a sale. To this end, the legislature, by a vote nearly or quite unanimous, authorized the Commissioners of the Land Office to "dispose of any of the waste and unappropriated lands in the State, in such parcels, on such terms, and in such manner, as they shall judge most conducive to the interests of the State." Powers more unlimited were never confided to any body of men. The Commissioners were, the Governor, the Secretary of State, the Attorney-General, the Treasurer, and the Auditor.

Then followed some of the most extraordinary land sales that even this richly-landed continent has known. In the course of the summer, the Commissioners sold the enormous quantity of five and a half millions of acres, at an average price of about eighteen cents per acre. It was sold in prodigious tracts, the number of purchasers not exceeding the number of millions of acres disposed of. One tract brought three shillings an acre; another, two shillings; another, one

shilling. The most astounding sale of all was one to Alexander McComb of more than three million six hundred thousand acres, at the seemingly ridiculous price of eight pence per acre, to be paid in five annual installments! The sum realized by all the sales was a million and thirty thousand dollars, not more than half of which was immediately available.

When these sales were made public a great outcry arose in all parts of the State, and resolutions of censure were moved in the legislature. It was everywhere charged that Governor Clinton had a personal interest in the Macomb purchase. Colonel Burr, it was shown, had had no part in effecting the sales, as he was absent on official duty when they had taken place. At the time, therefore, he escaped the odium of the transaction, and it was reserved for subsequent periods of political contention to connect his name with them. The Commissioners replied, first, by denying, point-blank, that any of their number had the slightest personal interest ineither of the sales; which was, unquestionably, the fact. They said, too, what no one could deny, that they had not transcended the power confided to them by the legislature; that no better terms could be obtained for the lands; and that the chief object of the State in selling was to bring private interest to bear upon getting the lands sold to actual settlers. The Commissioners were, at length, completely exonerated, and the sales which they made really *had* the effect of hastening the settlement of the lands. Experience, I believe, has proved that if there *must* be speculation in wild lands, the people's own domain, it is a less evil to sell it in tracts too large to be retained in the hands of the speculator, than in quantities which are likely to be held by individuals till the toil of surrounding settlers has enhanced their value.

In January, 1791, occurred what is regarded as the great mystery of Colonel Burr's political career. He was elected to represent the State of New York in the Senate of the United States. Rufus King and Philip Schuyler were the first United States Senators chosen by the State of New York; and, as General Schuyler had drawn the short term, his seat would become vacant on the 4th of March, 1791. He was a candi-

date for reëlection. Beside being in actual possession of the seat, he had the advantage of old renown, influential connections, and the powerful aid of Hamilton, now the confidential man of Washington's administration, and in the full tide of his great financial measures. Above all, the Federalists had a majority in the legislature which was to elect the Senator, and Schuyler was the most federal of Federalists. Aaron Burr was a young man of thirty-five, not known in national politics, with no claims upon either party, and with few advantages which were not personal. Yet, upon General Schuyler's nomination, he was at once, and decisively, rejected; and, immediately after, when Aaron Burr was proposed, he was, upon the first vote, in both Houses, elected. Sixteen Senators voted, of whom twelve voted for Burr. In the Assembly, Burr's majority was five.

The newspapers of the time throw no light upon the causes of Burr's election. They record the vote, without a word of comment. No cotemporary record or memoir explains it. Mr. Davis says nothing about it. In the pamphlet war of 1804, Burr's vituperators frequently taunt him with having gained this great step without having done any service entitling him to it, but they do not as much as hint at the means by which it was gained. Of recent historians, the amiable and fair-minded Dr. Hammond (History of Political Parties in the State of New York) attributes Burr's success to his supposed moderation in politics, to his reputation as an orator, and to the contrast his fascinating manners presented to Schuyler's austerity. He adds that Morgan Lewis, a connection of the Livingstons, succeeded Burr as Attorney-General, and suggests that this may have been "*foreseen*" at the time of the election. Mr. Hildreth conjectures that the election of Burr to the Senate may have been a bid from the Federalists to win him over to their side! But would the Federalists, as a party, have defeated Hamilton's father-in-law for such an object?

The only glimmer of light thrown on the affair in the correspondence of the period, is shed by the following passage of a letter from Schuyler to Hamilton, dated January 29th, 1792: "As no good," says the general, "could possibly result from

evincing any resentment to Mr. Burr for the part he took last winter (when the election for Senator occurred), I have on every occasion behaved toward him as if he had not been the principal in the business." What business? If the reference is to the election, we learn from it that General Schuyler attributed his defeat to Burr's personal exertions; and if the general was correct in his supposition, then *we* may conjecture that, in some mysterious way, Colonel Burr contrived to unite in his own support the influence of the Clintons and the Livingstons. The Livingstons, as a family, it is now well known, resented the splendid elevation of the young adventurer, Alexander Hamilton, a man not native to the soil; while Robert R. Livingston, the head of their ancient house, a statesman distinguished in the country's annals while yet Hamilton was a merchant's clerk in the West Indies, was suffered to languish in obscurity. Burr played upon this string a few years later with great effect. It may have been touched in 1791.

Apart from these impenetrabilities, there is no difficulty in plausibly accounting for Colonel Burr's election to the Senate. General Schuyler was personally unacceptable. He was no speaker. He was a thorough-going partizan, and bore the scars of former political contests. He was identified with Hamilton, whose financial system was rending the nation into factions, and whose towering eminence dwarfed so many of his cotemporaries. Against Schuyler a direct party opposition would probably have failed. Burr was a new man, which is, in politics, often an overwhelming advantage. He was thought to be a moderate man, who would represent the State ably, fairly, and faithfully. He was an educated man, in a community where a collegiate education was a valuable distinction, and one of the rarest. He stood before the people in the untarnished luster of powers whose speciality it was to shine. Except Hamilton, he was thought to be the finest orator in the State, as well as a man of peculiarly effective tact. He was master of an address and manner which could be impressive or pleasing as the occasion required. Some members were, doubtless, proud to send to Philadelphia so fine a gen-

tleman as Colonel Burr; for, in that day, more than now, manner was power. I have conversed with men who were captivated with the presence and style of the man when he was nearly fourscore, and had both legs in the grave. What power, then, there must have been in his presence when he was in the prime of his years! Just at that time, too, the New York legislature was agitated on the subject of the United States Senate sitting with closed doors; one of the great little questions of the day. Schuyler, haughty old soldier that he was, was the man to insist upon excluding the vulgar public from the deliberations of a body that felt itself to be the American House of Lords. Complaisant and popular Burr, who had enough of the Napoleonic intellect to see the immeasurable importance of little things, was, then and afterward, an advocate of an open Senate.

Thus conjecture attempts to supply the want of information.

If the causes of Burr's elevation are uncertain, the consequences of it are not. Schuyler felt his defeat acutely, and Hamilton was painfully disappointed. It was of the utmost possible importance to the Secretary of the Treasury to have a reliable majority in Congress; and the presence of a devoted father-in-law, in a Senate of twenty-eight members sitting with closed doors, was convenient. From 1791 dates Hamilton's repugnance to Burr, and soon after his letters begin to teem with passages expressive of that repugnance. The two families were on terms of politeness, then and always. The two men were, to all appearance, cordial friends enough down to the last month of Hamilton's life. But from this time, in whatever direction Burr sought advancement, or advancement sought him, his secret, inveterate opponent was Alexander Hamilton; until at length the politics of the United States was resolved into a contest between these two individuals.

The effect upon Burr's own mind of his election to the Senate is dimly visible in his correspondence. He seems now to have accepted politics as his vocation. His wife writes to him a few weeks after the election, and some months before he took his seat, that he ought to take measures to reëstablish

his health *before turning politician.* His own letters contain scarcely an allusion to politics. Once, he advises Mrs. Burr not to travel, if possible, with a political partizan, but rather with an opponent. Occasionally he says that he dares not trust the public mail with political secrets. When he does write upon politics, it is in ciphers. He requests 18 to ask 45 whether, for any reasons, 21 could be induced to vote for 6, and, if he could, whether 14 would withdraw his opposition to 29, and 11 exert his influence in favor of 22. The reader will, however, remember that this mode of correspondence was common at that day between politicians. Though Burr was, perhaps, the most mysterious politician of them all, yet all politicians were, more or less, mysterious.

CHAPTER XII.

A SENATOR.

ENTERS THE SENATE — THE SENATE'S INTERVIEW WITH PRESIDENT WASHINGTON — BURR'S ADDRESS TO THE PRESIDENT — LETTER FROM THE FRENCH KING — THE PRESIDENT FORBIDS COLONEL BURR TO EXAMINE THE RECORDS — BURR TALKED OF FOR THE GOVERNORSHIP OF THE STATE — BURR'S OPINION ON THE DISPUTED CANVASS — SECOND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION — BURR A CANDIDATE — HAMILTON OPPOSES AND DENOUNCES HIM — BURR AS A DEBATER — WASHINGTON'S REFUSAL TO SEND HIM AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE — THIRD PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION — BURR A PROMINENT CANDIDATE — HAMILTON AGAIN OPPOSES HIM — DOMESTIC LIFE — DEATH OF MRS. BURR — EDUCATION OF HIS DAUGHTER.

ON the first day of the session, October 24th, 1791, Colonel Burr "took the oaths and his seat."

The next day President Washington, as the custom then was, delivered his annual Speech to both Houses assembled in the Senate Chamber. The Speech was composed after the model of the English king's speeches to Parliament, which it resembled also in brevity. First, the President addressed his "Fellow-citizens of the Senate and of the House of Representatives;" then, the "Gentlemen of the Senate;" then, the "Gentlemen of the House of Representatives;" and lastly, the "Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives." When the ceremonial was over, and the Senators were left in possession of their chamber, a committee of three was appointed to draw up the usual address in reply to the President, and Colonel Burr, their new and youngest associate, received the compliment of being named chairman of that committee. He prepared the address, which, on being read to the Senate, was accepted without amendment. The committee were next ordered to wait on the President to ask when and where he would receive the Senate's reply to his speech. Colonel Burr, on their return, reported Monday, at noon, at the President's own house. At the time ap-

pointed, the Senators went in procession to the President's, and were received with that serious and stately courtesy which was then in vogue among persons in high office.

Fancy a long dining-room, with the tables and chairs removed. Before the fire-place stands a tall and superb figure, clad in a suit of black velvet, with black silk stockings and silver buckles. His hair, white with powder, is gathered behind in a silk bag. He wears yellow gloves, and holds a cocked hat adorned with cockade and plume. A sword, with hilt of polished steel and sheath of white leather, further relieves the somber magnificence of the President's form. The Senators enter, with Vice-President Adams at their head, and form a semicircle round the President while Mr. Adams reads the address.

As a relic of an extinct usage, the reader may be gratified to see the address prepared by Colonel Burr for this occasion. It reads as follows:

"SIR: The Senate of the United States have received with the highest satisfaction the assurances of public prosperity contained in your speech to both Houses. The multiplied blessings of Providence have not escaped our notice, or failed to excite our gratitude.

"The benefits which flow from the restoration of public and private confidence are conspicuous and important; and the pleasure with which we contemplate them is heightened by your assurance of those further communications which shall confirm their existence and indicate their source.

"While we rejoice in the success of those military operations which have been directed against the hostile Indians, we lament with you the necessity that has produced them; and we participate the hope that the present prospect of a general peace, on terms of moderation and justice, may be wrought into complete and permanent effect; and that the measures of government may equally embrace the security of our frontiers and the general interests of humanity. Our solicitude to obtain which, will insure our zealous attention to an object so warmly espoused by the principles of benevolence, and so highly interesting to the honor and welfare of the nation.

"The several subjects which you have particularly recommended, and those which remain of former sessions, will engage our early consideration. We are encouraged to prosecute them with alacrity and steadiness, by the belief that they will interest no passion but that for the general welfare; by the assurance of concert, and by a view of those arduous and important arrangements which have been already accomplished.

"We observe, sir, the constancy and activity of your zeal for the public good. The example will animate our efforts to promote the happiness of our country."

To this address, the senatorial record informs us, the President was pleased to make the following reply:

"GENTLEMEN: This manifestation of your zeal for the honor and the happiness of our country derives its full value from the share which your deliberations have already had in promoting both.

"I thank you for the favorable sentiments with which you view the part I have borne in the arduous trust committed to the government of the United States; and desire you to be assured that all my zeal will continue to second those further efforts for the public good which are insured by the spirit in which you are entering on the present session."

Whereupon, we may presume, the Senate made a formal and ceremonious exit, and then returned to their chamber.

The session thus imposingly begun, lasted more than six months, but no spectator witnessed, and no corps of reporters recorded, the proceedings. The official record exists, but it is little more than a formal statement of votes. In Mr. Benton's valuable abridgment of the Congressional Debates, the proceedings of this Senate, from October to May, occupy only five pages. On one of those pages the name of Colonel Burr occurs in connection with an affair which even now has a touching interest.

How grateful the people of the United States were to the French, and to the French king, for the timely help afforded by them in the late war, can not be realized by the present luxurious generation; nor how passionate and universal was

the sympathy of the delivered nation with the subsequent struggle of the French for freedom. No sooner was America free, than France aspired. In the summer of 1789 the news of the Bastile's immortal storming thrilled the young republic. Soon, the excesses of the Parisians, in their delirium of terror and desire, shocked the world, and gave pause to the more conservative even of Americans. The flight of the king in 1790, appears in the memoirs and letters of that age as a terrible event; one which lost the revolutionists the sympathy of millions. But the king was brought back to Paris; a grand reconciliation with the people he had misunderstood was enacted; the king accepted the constitution; and France, for a week, was in ecstacies. Down to this period, and beyond it, the great mass of Americans were ardent sympathizers with the Revolution. But Washington, Hamilton, Adams, Rufus King, and other leading conservatives, began to be quite decided in the opinion that the French Revolution was essentially diabolical, and could issue in no good to the French, or any other people.

In March, 1792, the President sent a message to Congress worded with his usual caution, but so worded as to betray his own opinion. "Knowing," said he, "the friendly interest you take in whatever *may* promote the happiness and prosperity of the French nation," he laid before them a letter just received from his Most Christian Majesty. The letter which poor Louis had sent his "very dear great friends and allies," was the following:

"We make it our duty to inform you that we have accepted the constitution which has been presented to us in the name of the French nation, and according to which France will be henceforth governed. We do not doubt that you take an interest in an event so important to our kingdom, and to us; and that it is with real pleasure we take this occasion to renew to you assurances of the sincere friendship we bear you. Whereupon, we pray God to have you, very dear, great friends and allies, in his just and holy keeping."

This letter having been read in the Senate, a difference arose as to the manner in which its reception should be ac-

knowledged. First, a frigid resolution was proposed, to the effect that the President be informed, that the Senate have received the news contained in the king's letter with satisfaction. This resolution was rejected by a vote of six to twenty-one; Colonel Burr voting against it; his colleague, Mr. King, for it. The resolution was then amended, so as to request the President to *make known to the king* that the Senate had received the tidings with *the highest* satisfaction. This was passed.

Colonel Munroe, a few days after, revived the subject of the Senate's sitting with closed doors, and moved that, during the recess, galleries be constructed in the chamber for the accommodation of the public, who should, after the present session, be admitted to witness the proceedings. This proposition was rejected by a vote of eight to seventeen. Colonel Burr, who always favored the measure, and afterward assisted to carry it, was absent, I presume, when this vote was taken, as his name does not appear in the record.

Though Colonel Burr began his senatorial career by being the medium of the Senate's high courtesy to General Washington, yet, before the session was over, he came into disagreeable collision with the President. Burr was Business incarnate. His activity was irrepressible. Being now cut off from his ordinary employments, and having deliberately turned politician, he was eager to acquire knowledge respecting state-craft. It was one of his projects, too, to write a History of the American Revolution. For these reasons, he was often busy, during his first winter in Congress, among the records in the Department of State, of which his friend Jefferson was then the chief. Always an early riser, he was accustomed, for a time, to go to the department as early as five in the morning. He employed a messenger to make a fire, a confidential clerk to assist him in searching and copying, a servant to bring him his breakfast; and so, from five until ten o'clock, the business went vigorously on. This practice was continued till nearly the close of the session, when operations were interrupted by a peremptory order from the President, forbidding his further examination. Desiring to complete

his knowledge respecting the late surrender of the western posts, he addressed a note to Mr. Jefferson, requesting permission to make that particular examination. The Secretary replied that "it had been *concluded* to be improper to communicate the correspondence of existing ministers." Burr appears to have regarded this as an uncalled-for and arbitrary proceeding. It was in accordance with the system of the time; but from what we *now* know of the relations of the persons concerned, and the scenes daily transpiring in the cabinet, we may infer that if the searcher of the records had been a Senator approved and trusted by the Secretary of the Treasury, he would not have been denied access to them—at least, not in a peremptory manner.

In April, 1792, there was to be an election for governor in the State of New York, and Colonel Burr was frequently mentioned as a candidate. At that time, the respectable salary and immense patronage of the governor, rendered the office more imposing and more desired than a seat in the Senate. Burr was thought of as a candidate, first, by the Republican party, who feared to try the field again with Governor Clinton; secondly, by the Federalists, who were not confident of succeeding with a candidate fully identified with their party; thirdly, he was proposed as an independent candidate, on the ground that he *belonged to no party*, and would be supported by the *moderate men* of all parties. The truth is, that Colonel Burr was then a very popular man, and both parties would have liked to secure the advantage of his name and talents. While it was still uncertain whether he would run for the governorship, some of Hamilton's friends were of opinion that the best policy of the Federalists would be to support Burr, and they wrote to Hamilton to that effect. Mr. Ledyard, February 1, wrote from New York, that on his arrival in the city, he found that "a tide was likely to make strongly for Mr. Burr. Mr. Schuyler," he continues, "supposes that if Mr. Clinton and Mr. Burr were the only competitors, and his (Schuyler's) friends thrown out of the scale, it would be doubtful which succeeded." After showing that, to beat Burr, the Federalists must either support Clinton or run a third candi-

date, neither of which was advisable, Mr. Ledyard adds the following observations: "If Burr finally succeeds, and you have not the merit of it, it would be an event extremely disagreeable to me. With this impression, I have sought repeated interviews with him, until I could procure an *artless* declaration of his sentiments, both with respect to the union on present grounds, and also with respect to you. He has expressed a sincere regard for the safety and well-being of the former. With respect to yourself, he expresses an entire confidence in the wisdom and integrity of your designs, and a real personal friendship; and which he does not seem to suppose you doubt of, or that you ever will, unless it may arise from meddling interveners."

The next day after this letter was dispatched, James Watson, another leading Federalist, writes to Hamilton in a similar strain. Burr's chances, he thought, were good, and, if the Federalists should go for him, strong. Had they not better support him? If they do not, will it not make him an opponent of the Federal party, if he is not now? If they do, will it not attach him to the Federalists? And if he should turn traitor, will it not so destroy his popularity as to deprive him of the power of doing harm? "Whenever," says Mr. Watson, "I imagine how much easier it is to embarrass and obstruct the benign operations of government than to give it the requisite tone and vigor, I am solicitous to remove talents, perseverance, and address, as far from the opposition as possible." "The absence of evil will continue to be desirable until the public mind becomes more quiet, and federal habits take deeper root. I shall only add that the cautious distance observed by this gentleman toward all parties, however exceptionable in a politician, may be a real merit in a governor."

Upon the proposal thus plausibly urged, Hamilton, the unquestioned leader of the Federal party in the State, placed his veto. A word from him would, in all probability, have made Aaron Burr Governor of New York in 1792. But that word was not spoken. The Federalists nominated the virtuous John Jay, the Republicans adhered to their old standard-

bearer, Governor Clinton, and the contest was a strictly party one.

It was the closest and angriest the State had yet seen, and the issue, instead of calming, exasperated parties more than the strife itself. There was an informality in the canvass, and both sides claimed the victory. The canvassers were eleven in number, of whom seven thought that Clinton had carried the State by a majority of one hundred and eight, while the remaining four were for giving the victory to Jay. After many stormy discussions, the canvassers agreed to request the opinion of the Senators, Rufus King and Aaron Burr, upon the point in dispute, which was the following:

The law then required that the votes of a county should be sealed up by the inspectors of election, delivered into the hands of the *sheriff*, and by him or his deputy conveyed intact to the Secretary of State. Now, it chanced that the county of Otsego, on this occasion, had no sheriff. R. R. Smith had held the office, but his term had expired. Another gentleman had been appointed sheriff, but had not yet been sworn in; and during the brief interregnum, the important business of receiving and conveying the votes had presented itself. In these circumstances, Mr. Smith, the *late* sheriff, as was natural, performed the duty. But he was not the *sheriff*. Nay, he had been elected to the board of supervisors, an office incompatible with that of sheriff, and had actually taken his seat at the board, and performed official acts. The question was, whether the votes received and sent by him could be legally canvassed. If yes, the Federalists had triumphed, and John Jay was governor. If no, the Republicans were in the ascendant, and George Clinton retained the power he had wielded for sixteen years.

Every head in the United States that had a smattering of law in it was given up to the consideration of this great question in the spring of 1792. The two Senators, upon conferring, discovered that an irreconcilable difference of opinion existed between them on the subject. Colonel Burr proposed that they should, for that reason, decline advising the canvassers. But as Mr. King avowed an intention of giving his

own opinion, nothing remained but that Colonel Burr should give his also. The two opinions were given. Both were able, clear, and brief. Mr. King's, which was for admitting the votes, carried conviction with it to every Federal mind in the country; while Colonel Burr's, which was for rejecting them, was equally convincing to the Republican intellect. Indeed, it was, considering all the circumstances, a question really difficult to decide, and the best lawyers of that day differed upon it, as doubtless would the best lawyers of the present day if it were submitted to them. Before giving his own, Colonel Burr obtained the written opinion of Edmund Randolph (Attorney-General), Pierpont Edwards, Jonathan D. Sergeant, and other eminent legal friends, all of whom coincided with him. On the other hand, Rufus King could exhibit an imposing array of names in support of his opinion. Mr. King was for having *justice* done; Burr, for having the *law* observed. Both opinions were doubtless as sincere as they were characteristic.*

The canvassers, thus compelled to choose between two opinions diametrically adverse, decided, *of course*, to follow that which accorded with the political preferences of the ma-

* The following is the material paragraph of Colonel Burr's opinion, which, he declared, was never answered, except by abuse: "There are instances of offices being exercised by persons holding under an authority apparently good, but which, on strict legal examination, proves defective; whose acts, nevertheless, are, with *some limitations*, considered as valid. This authority is called *colorable*, and the officer, in such cases, is said to be an officer *de facto;* which intends an intermediate state between an exercise strictly lawful, and one without such color of right. Mr. Smith does not appear to me to have holden the office of sheriff, on the 3d of March, under such color or pretense of right. The term of his office had expired, and he had formally expressed his determination not to accept a reappointment; after the expiration of the year he accepted, and even two days before the receipt of the ballots, openly exercised an office incompatible with that of sheriff; and it is to be inferred, from the tenor of the affidavits, that he then knew of the appointment of Mr. Gilbert. The assumption of this authority by Mr. Smith does not even appear to have been produced by any urgent public necessity or imminent public inconvenience. Mr. Gilbert was qualified in season to have discharged the duty, and, for aught that is shown, his attendance, if really desired, might have been procured still earlier."

jority of their number. They pronounced George Clinton duly elected. The exasperation of the Federalists, upon the promulgation of this decision, was such that, for a time, the State seemed in danger of anarchy. For many years the dream of that party had been to see Clinton defeated, and a Federalist in the executive chair. He *had* been defeated, but the scepter which they were just about to grasp, they now saw snatched away from between their eager hands. Nothing but the moderation of Mr. Jay, and the general regard for law, which prevailed in the most order-loving of parties, saved the State from temporary confusion.

As each Senator had decided in favor of his own party, the motives of both were assailed. Colonel Burr, it was charged, was an adherent of Governor Clinton, and wished to ingratiate himself with the Republicans. In a letter to a friend, written soon after he had given his opinion, he alludes to these accusations. "Upon the late occasion," he says, "I earnestly wished and sought to be relieved from the necessity of giving any opinion, particularly from a knowledge that it would be disagreeable to you and a few others whom I respect and wish always to gratify. But the conduct of Mr. King left me no alternative. I was obliged to give an opinion, and I have not yet learned to give any other than which my judgment directs. It would, indeed, be the extreme of weakness in me to expect friendship from Mr. Clinton. I have too many reasons to believe that he regards me with jealousy and malevolence. Still, this alone ought not to have induced me to refuse my advice to the canvassers. Some pretend, indeed, but none can believe, that I am prejudiced in his favor. I have not even seen or spoken to him since January last."

Nevertheless, three months after these words were written, Governor Clinton nominated him to the bench of the Supreme Court of the State. Colonel Burr preferred to retain his seat in the Senate, and declined the judgeship.

The attention of the public was soon drawn from questions affecting a single State to one in which all the States were equally concerned. For the second time, the young nation was to choose chief magistrates; or, to speak more correctly,

a *Vice-President*, for there could be no competition for the first office in the people's gift, while George Washington was willing to serve them in it. There was an opposition, it is true; but its force was directed chiefly against Hamilton's measures; and as soon as it was known that General Washington had consented to serve another term, the hopes of the opposition were limited to the election of a Vice-President, in place of Mr. Adams.

At that time, the reader must bear in mind, no one was directly nominated for the office of Vice-President. The Constitution required each presidential elector to vote for two persons to fill the two highest offices; the man who received the greatest number of votes was declared President, and he who received the next highest number was declared Vice-President. At the first presidential election ever held, the vote of the electoral college was as follows: For George Washington, 69 votes (the whole number); John Adams, 34; John Jay, 9; Robert H. Harrison, 6; John Rutledge, 6; John Hancock, 4; George Clinton, 3; Samuel Huntingdon, 2; John Wilton, 2; James Armstrong, 1; Edward Telfair, 1; Benjamin Lincoln, 1. Mr. Adams, therefore, became Vice-President though he received one less than a majority of the whole number of votes. At that election there was nothing like an organized opposition. Every elector's first choice was General Washington; and for the second office named the favorite son of his own State, or a man particularly admired by himself.

But now there was opposition; of which more will be said in another chapter. At present the object of that opposition, as just remarked, was to elevate one of their own party to the Vice-Presidency. George Clinton, Governor of the State of New York, the man distinguished above all others in the United States for his opposition to the adoption of the federal Constitution, was the candidate upon whom a majority of the party fixed their hopes, and upon whom its strength was finally concentrated. But, among the names mentioned in private circles and in public prints for the office, was that of Aaron Burr. Indeed, for a short period, it seemed uncertain who

would be the candidate of the opposition in some of the northern States, Clinton or Burr!

Rufus King began to be alarmed for the success of Mr. Adams. September 17, 1792, we find him writing to Hamilton in this manner: "If the enemies of the government are secret and united, we shall lose Mr. Adams. Burr is industrious in his canvass, and his object is well understood by our antis. Mr. Edwards is to make interest for him in Connecticut, and Mr. Dallas, who is here, and quite in the circle of the governor and the party, informs us that Mr. Burr will be supported as Vice-President in Pennsylvania. Should Jefferson and his friends unite in the project, the votes of Mr. Adams may be so reduced, that though more numerous than those of any other person, he may decline the office. Nothing which has heretofore happened so decisively proves the inveteracy of the opposition. Should they succeed in degrading Mr. Adams, much would be to be apprehended in respect to the measures which have received the sanction of government."

It is but common fairness to remind the reader that this letter was written by a political opponent, who could not be *personally* cognizant of Burr's movements as a politician. In reading letters, to be hereafter quoted, the same fact is to be constantly kept in view by those who wish to know the truth respecting the man and his times.

Hamilton replies to Mr. King that he is astonished to hear of Burr's appearance as a candidate. The Secretary of the Treasury was evidently puzzled, and, perhaps, a little alarmed. A few days after, he wrote to a friend (whose name has not been revealed by the editor of his works) a long letter deprecating the advancement of Burr, and denouncing him in the strongest language that even his vigorous pen could command. After saying that he was not yet quite sure that "Burr's appearance on the stage was not a diversion in favor of Mr. Clinton," he proceeds as follows:

"Mr. Clinton's success I should think very unfortunate; I am not for trusting the government too much in the hands of its enemies. But still, Mr. C. is a man of property, and in private life, so far as I know, of probity. I fear the other

gentleman is unprincipled, both as a public and a private man. When the Constitution was in deliberation, his conduct was equivocal; but its enemies, who, I believe, best understood him, considered him as with them. In fact, I take it he is for or against nothing, but as it suits his interest or ambition. He is determined, as I conceive, to make his way to be the head of the popular party, and to climb, *per fas aut nefas*, to the highest honors of the State, and as much higher as circumstances may permit. Embarrassed, as I understand, in his circumstances, with an extravagant family, bold, enterprizing, and intriguing, I am mistaken if it be not his object to play the game of confusion, and I feel it to be a religious duty to oppose his career.

"I have hitherto scrupulously abstained from interference in elections; but the occasion is, in my opinion, of sufficient importance to warrant, in this instance, a departure from that rule. I therefore commit my opinion to you without scruple; but in perfect confidence. I pledge my character for discernment, that it is incumbent on every good man to resist the present design."

This was written on the 21st of September. On the 26th, he writes to another unnamed person in the same strain. "Mr. Burr's integrity as an individual," says Hamilton, "is not unimpeached," and, "as a public man, he is one of the worst sort. Secretly turning liberty into ridicule, he knows as well as most men how to make use of the name. In a word, if we have an embryo Cæsar in the United States, 'tis Burr."

These letters were not designed for the amusement of the Secretary's correspondent. In a few days, Rufus King writes back to him, that "*care has been taken to put our friends at the eastward on their guard.*" The letters produced *effects*, we see.

To General C. C. Pinckney of South Carolina, Hamilton writes to the same purport, and urges him to promote the election of men friendly to the administration. As he denounced Burr in his northern letters, he assails Jefferson in his southern—Jefferson, his colleague in the cabinet. "'Tis suspected by some," he says, "that the plan is only to divide the votes

of the northern and middle States to let in Mr. Jefferson by the votes of the South. I will not scruple to say to you, in confidence, that this also would be a serious misfortune to the government. That gentleman whom I once *very much esteemed*, but who does not permit me to retain that sentiment for him, is certainly a man of sublimated and paradoxical imaginations, entertaining and propagating opinions inconsistent with dignified and orderly government."

Five days later, the active Secretary of the Treasury writes another letter upon Burr, but in a much more guarded manner. "My opinion of Mr. Burr," he remarks, with admirable consistency, "is YET TO FORM, but according to the present state of it, he is a man whose only political principle is to *mount, at all events*, to the highest legal honors of the nation, and as much further as circumstances will carry him. Imputations, not favorable to his integrity as a man, rest upon him, but I do not vouch for their authenticity."

On the 21st of September, then, he was willing to pledge his character for discernment, that Burr was an embryo Cæsar. On the 15th of October, his opinion of the individual was yet to form. The good Hamilton was a man of very ardent feelings; he was devoted to the support of the system he had created; and was apt to give way to a too sweeping denunciation of the men whom he disapproved. And besides, his correspondent of September was, probably, a man he could more implicitly *trust*, than he could him of October.

But these denunciations might as well have been spared. It is certain, that neither Burr nor his friends entertained a serious thought of his competing for the Vice-Presidency. He received just one vote. Of the eight electors of South Carolina, seven gave their second vote for John Adams; one for Aaron Burr. The number of electors had increased, in four years, from 69 to 132. George Washington again received the whole number. For John Adams, 77 votes were cast; for George Clinton, 50; for Thomas Jefferson, 11; for Aaron Burr, 1. This single vote, given by a personal friend, probably, may have been of some importance to Burr, in associating his name, in the popular mind, with the office.

For six years, Colonel Burr played a distinguished, and occasionally, a conspicuous part in the Senate of the United States. And that is nearly all we know of him as a Senator. He was renowned as an orator, but no speech of his exists, except in faint outline. John Taylor writes a note to him, on one occasion, in which he uses this language: "We shall leave you to reply to King: first, because you desired it; second, all depends on it; no one else can do it; and the audience will expect it." There are allusions in the political papers of the day to a great speech delivered by Burr in opposition to Jay's treaty, which evidently gained him much applause. It is spoken of as though every one was acquainted with it; as we should allude to one of the well-known speeches of Clay or Webster. Rufus King, I am enabled to state, was of opinion that Burr's talents as a debater were overrated. In conversing upon those times, Mr. King would say that Burr had a rare faculty in summing up a discussion, but that he added to it few ideas of his own. He never opened a debate. But where a question had been discussed to exhaustion, he knew how to use well the vast stores of information which had been elicited, and to set in new and dense array the arguments that had been used by others. This faculty, aided by his persuasive and emphatic manner, made him a favorite speaker; and the more, as he never wearied an audience by prolixity.

That he was an industrious member is indicated by the number of committees upon which he served. The records show, however, that he was not generally in his place during the first and last days of a session. We may infer from his correspondence that he was full of occupation of some kind in Philadelphia. He frequently alludes to the heaps of unopened letters upon his table.

He acted with the liberal, or Republican party, invariably. He contended for an open Senate, session after session, till, in 1794, the measure was carried by a vote of nineteen to eight. He supported the resolution that "every printer of newspapers may send one paper to each and every other printer of newspapers within the United States, free of postage, under such

regulations as the Postmaster-General shall provide." He favored the admission of Albert Gallatin to serve as a Senator, which was opposed on the ostensible ground that he had not been a citizen of the country for the requisite nine years. He took the lead in opposing Chief Justice Jay's mission to England, for the twofold reason that it was unnecessary to send any minister at all to England at that time; and that it was contrary to the spirit of the Constitution, impolitic and unsafe, to select an embassador from the bench of the Supreme Court. All measures tending to the support and comfort of the French in their struggle with the leagued despotisms of Europe, found in Burr an advocate. In a word, he was a leader and champion of the party which acknowledged Jefferson as its chief, and boasted the adherence of Madison and Monroe.

After Burr's downfall, Jefferson used to say that he had never liked him; and that, at the very height of Burr's popularity, he had habitually cautioned Madison not to trust him too far. "I never," wrote Jefferson once, "thought him an honest, frank-dealing man; but considered him as a crooked gun, or other perverted machine, whose aim or shot you could never be sure of." But this was in 1807. There is abundant proof, that, in the full tide of his senatorial career, Burr's standing, both with the leaders and with the masses of his party, was only second to that of Jefferson himself.

Take this incident, for example. In 1794, the unpopularity of Gouverneur Morris, the American minister in France, was at its height. The republicans of Paris, and the republicans of the United States, were aware of his utter want of sympathy with the Revolution, and were clamorous for his recall. General Washington had let fall an intimation of his willingness to yield to their desire, and to appoint a member of the opposition in his place. Accordingly, a caucus of the Republican Senators and Representatives was called to select a candidate to be proposed to the President for the mission. The caucus agreed to recommend Colonel Burr. Mr. Madison and Mr. Monroe were members of the committee appointed to wait upon General Washington, and communicate the preference of the caucus; and in the interview with the

President, Mr. Madison was the spokesman. After hearing the message, General Washington was silent for a few moments. Then he said, it had been the rule of his public life never to nominate for a high and responsible office a man of whose *integrity* he was not assured. He had not confidence in Colonel Burr in that respect, and therefore must decline nominating him. The committee retired, and reported the result of the interview. The caucus unanimously resolved to adhere to their nomination, and requested the committee to inform the President of the fact. General Washington was evidently irritated by the second proposal of an offensive name, and replied with warmth that his decision was irrevocable. He added, apologetically, "I will nominate you, Mr. Madison, or you, Mr. Monroe." Madison replied that he had, long ago, made up his mind not to go abroad. The committee, upon reporting the result of the second conference to the caucus, found it more inflexible than ever; and were instructed to go a third time to the President, and say that Colonel Burr was the choice of the Republican Senators and Representatives, and that they would make no other recommendation. This message was delivered to the Secretary of State, who, knowing the President's feelings on the subject, declined delivering it. Colonel Monroe was finally selected.

Reflecting upon this circumstance, the idea *will* occur to the individual long immersed in the reading of that period, that this invincible distrust of Colonel Burr was perhaps implanted, certainly nourished, in the mind of General Washington by his useful friend and adherent, Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton was not a person to conceal from General Washington his repugnance to the man whose career he felt it a religious duty to oppose. Washington had trusted and applauded Burr in the Revolution. Whence this utter, this resolute distrust, if not derived from the minister in whose sagacity and honesty the President had such absolute faith? Another suspicion steals over the immersed intellect. The remarkable pertinacity of the democratic caucus *may* have been partly owing to the desirableness of removing an unmanageable

candidate three thousand miles from the scene of the next presidential election.

From that contest the preëminence of General Washington was to be removed, and a *President* was to be chosen. Jefferson was the choice of a majority of the Republicans; but, since the last election, Burr had made surprising advances in popularity and importance. George Clinton was eclipsed. Burr was everywhere spoken of as the Republican choice for the second office, and there were certainly a respectable number of persons in the country who preferred him for the first. We find numerous indications of this in the letters and papers of the time. A gentleman writes from Boston to Hamilton, December 9th, 1796: "Your Judge Smith sent letters to some of our electors, and, I believe, to New Hampshire, soliciting votes for Burr very strongly, and rather pressing for Jefferson." Hamilton writes to Rufus King (then in Europe), December 16th, 1796: "Our anxiety has been extreme on the subject of the election for President. If we may trust our information, which we have every reason to trust, it is now decided that *neither Jefferson nor Burr* can be President. * * * The event will not a little mortify Burr. Virginia has given him only one vote."

We may infer from this language, that there was a period of the canvass when Hamilton, the brains and nerve of the Federal party, apprehended the *possibility* of Aaron Burr's succeeding General Washington in the presidential chair!

But, not to dwell upon this campaign—since a more stirring and a more decisive one awaits us—the result of it was as follows: John Adams received 71 votes; Thomas Jefferson, 68; Thomas Pinckney, 59; Aaron Burr, 30; Samuel Adams, 15; Oliver Ellsworth, 11; George Clinton, 7; John Jay, 5; James Iredell, 2; George Washington, 2; John Henry, 2; Samuel Johnson, 2; C. C. Pinckney, 1. So John Adams became President, Thomas Jefferson, Vice-President; and Aaron Burr was conspicuously before the country as a candidate for those coveted places. Of the 30 electoral votes cast for Burr, Tennessee gave him 3; Kentucky, 4; North Carolina, 6; Virginia, 1; Maryland, 3; Pennsylvania, 13. Not a vote did he

get from a Puritan State; nor did Jefferson. New England was as Federal as she was Puritanical, and had no vote for the anti-Federal grandson of her Puritan-in-chief. This fact does not countenance John Adams's emphatic assertion, that the capital upon which Burr embarked in the business of politician was the fame of his father and grandfather.

While thus Colonel Burr had been striding toward the high places of the world, events of importance had occurred in his own household. Before entering upon the decisive period of his political life, let us pause here for a moment and see how he appeared, in the day of his glory, as a husband, as a parent, and as a master.

As years rolled on and cares increased, the letters of Mrs. Burr to her husband became longer, and less in the style that Juliet would have used in writing to banished Romeo. But they were warm, confiding, and elegant; as his were to her. They were the letters of a careful and devoted wife to a husband she was proud of, and desired above all things to help and gratify. To her he confided every thing. His business was left partly in her care, and with her he conversed upon his political plans. He sometimes gave her information to be communicated to his political friends in New York. Occasionally, during the session of Congress, he would hurry away upon the adjournment of the Senate on Friday, to meet his wife at Trenton, and after spending Saturday and Sunday in her society, return on Sunday night to Philadelphia. To the last, she was a happy wife, and he an attentive, fond husband. I assert this positively. The contrary has been recently declared on many platforms; but I pronounce the assertion to be one of the thousand calumnies with which the memory of this singular, amiable, and faulty being has been assailed. No one now lives who can, of his own personal knowledge, speak of the domestic life of a lady who died sixty-two years ago. But there are many still living whose parents were most intimately conversant with the interior of Richmond Hill, and who have heard narrated all the minute incidents of the life led therein. The last of the old servants of the family died only a short time ago; and the persons best acquainted with

the best part of Burr's character are still walking these streets. His own letters to his wife—all respect, solicitude, and affection—confirm the positive asseverations of these. I repeat, therefore, that Mrs. Burr lived and died a satisfied, a confiding, a beloved, a trusted wife.

Soon after her husband "turned politician," her health, never vigorous, began to fail, and her maladies at length concentrated into a cancer of the most virulent and offensive description. She lingered long in anguish. Her husband, both by personal attentions and by the advice which he sought from the most eminent physicians, did much to relieve her sufferings—did all that mortal aid could do. He studied her case. He described her symptoms to his friend, Dr. Benjamin Rush, of Philadelphia, and concerted with him a new treatment. But nothing availed to stay the ravages of the disease. He proposed at one time to leave Congress, that he might devote himself exclusively to attending upon her. She besought him not to do so, and he remained in Philadelphia till her disease assumed a form that threatened speedy dissolution. She became, at length, an object most pitiable to contemplate; and in the spring of 1794, death relieved her sufferings, and deprived of their mistress the heart and home of Aaron Burr. They had lived together twelve years—twelve happy and triumphant years.

Burr was not given to sentiment. It was his principle not to mourn over an irrevocable calamity. "The best compliment you can pay me," he used to say to his wife, "is to be cheerful while I am absent." If he did not visibly grieve over her death, to the last day of his life he spoke of her in terms of emphatic and unqualified admiration. Among the very last words he ever spoke, was a sentence like this: "The mother of my Theo. was the best woman and finest lady I have ever known."

His daughter, a rosy little girl of eleven, was all that now made his house a home. From her infancy his heart and mind had been interested in that most fascinating of employments, the culture of a being tenderly beloved. With what unwearied assiduity he pursued the sweet vocation! His let-

ters, written from his senatorial desk at Philadelphia, show that his home thoughts were divided between the sick mother and the studious child; and when the mother's sufferings were over, the daughter's improvement absorbed his care. He pursued this darling object intelligently. "Cursed effects of fashionable education!" he writes to his wife, in Theodosia's tenth year, "of which both sexes are the advocates, and yours eminently the victims. If I could foresee that Theo. would become a *mere* fashionable woman, with all the attendant frivolity and vacuity of mind, adorned with whatever grace and allurement, I would earnestly pray God to take her forthwith hence. But I yet hope, by her, to convince the world what neither sex appear to believe—that women have souls!"

He appears to have gone to the opposite extreme. In her tenth year she was reading Horace and Terence, in the original Latin, learning the Greek grammar, speaking French, studying Gibbon, practicing on the piano, taking lessons in dancing, and learning to skate. Like all her race, she was precocious, and was accounted a prodigy, and she really was a child of superior endowments; but no girl of ten could pursue such a course of study without injury. Doubtless, the delicacy of her health, in after years, was due to this excess of study in childhood. As a child, however, she seemed to thrive upon the too luxurious diet; for though she had the family diminutiveness, she was a plump, pretty, and blooming girl. The moral precocity, which is so much more deadly than mental, she escaped, as it appears she told fibs, begged off from practicing, and was excessively fond of a holiday; which may have kept Horace and Gibbon from destroying her. The plan of her education was not merely devised by her father, but he personally aided in carrying out every part of it. He explained her lessons, he gave minute directions to her numerous instructors, he would have nothing learned by rote, he encouraged her with commendation, he gently ridiculed or sharply rebuked her indolence. When he was in Philadelphia, he required her to write to him frequently. He replied as often, mentioning each of her mistakes in spelling and gram-

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mar, remarking upon the writing and style of her last letter, comparing it with former efforts, and awarding praise or blame, as he thought she deserved. His letters to her are very kind, very thoughtful, very ingenious, often very wise and good.

Burr inherited the true pedagogical instinct. One of his epistles he concludes thus: "Let me see how handsomely you can subscribe your name in your next letter, about this size." In another, he tells her how much pleasure it would give him if she could contrive to lug into her letters occasionally a scrap of Terence, apropos. Sometimes he exults over the correctness of her last letter, telling her he had showed it to Dr. Rush, or some other friend, who thought it must have been written by a girl of sixteen. He reminds her to sit up straight, else she will go into a consumption; and then "farewell papa, farewell pleasure, farewell life." He gives her the most minute directions respecting the style and arrangement of her letters; tells her that he never permits one of hers to remain unanswered a single day, and demands of her the same promptitude.

The moral advice which he gives her is, most of it, very excellent. He insists upon her treating her governess with the most perfect respect and consideration. "Remember," he says, "that one in the situation of madame has a thousand things to fret her temper; and you know that one out of humor for any cause whatever, is apt to vent it on every person that happens to be in the way. We must learn to bear these things; and, let me tell you, that you will always feel much better, much happier, for having borne with serenity the spleen of any one, than if you had returned spleen for spleen." Nothing could be better than that. In the same letter he remarks: "I have often seen madame at table, and other situations, pay you the utmost attention, offer you twenty civilities, while you appeared scarcely sensible that she was speaking to you; or, at the most, replied with a cold *remercie*, without even a look of satisfaction or complacency. A moment's reflection will convince you that this conduct will be naturally construed into arrogance; as if you thought that all attention was *due* to you,

and as if you felt above showing the least to any body. I know that you abhor such sentiments, and that you are incapable of being actuated by them. Yet you expose yourself to the censure without intending or knowing it. I believe you will in future avoid it. Observe how Natalie replies to the smallest civility which is offered to her." That, too, is sound morality.

But there is, occasionally, a passage in his letters to her which has the Chesterfieldian taint. The worst example of this kind is the following: "In case you should dine in company with Mrs. ——, I will apprize you of one circumstance, by a trifling attention to which you may elevate yourself in her esteem. She is a great advocate for a very plain, rather abstemious diet in children, as you may see by her conduct with Miss Elizabeth. Be careful, therefore, to eat of but one dish; that a plain roast or boiled: little or no gravy or butter, and *very sparingly* of dessert or fruit: not more than half a glass of wine; and if more of any thing to eat or drink is offered, decline it. If they ask a reason—*Papa thinks it not good for me*, is the best that can be given."

Theodosia rewarded her father's solicitude by becoming the best educated woman of her time and country, as well as one of the most estimable. She never, of course, completed the conquest of Latin or Greek, but French she made entirely her own; and wrote an English style that could be elegantly playful, or correctly strong, as the subject required. On one occasion, during her father's public life, she translated, for his use, the Constitution of the United States into French. She also, at his request, undertook the translation of one of Bentham's works from French into English, and partly executed it. Her father never ceased, while she lived, to direct and urge the further improvement of her mind. From the deepest abyss of his misfortunes, he could still say to her, "*Be* what my heart desires, and it will console me for all the evils of life." And what a daughter was she to him! From the age of fourteen, the engaging mistress of his household, the companion of his leisure, the friend of his mind! In other days, his eloquent, persistent, fearless, indomitable champion!

Colonel Stone, in his Life of Brant, the Indian chief, gives us a pleasant glimpse of Theodosia Burr in her fourteenth year. She was then a grown woman, and reigned supreme over her father's house during his long absence at the seat of government. Brant, during one of the closing years of Burr's senatorship, visited Philadelphia, where, for some time, the magnificent Indian was a fashionable lion. Colonel Burr gave him a dinner party, which Volney, Talleyrand, and other notabilities attended. The incidents of that entertainment used to be related by Burr for forty years after they occurred, and they have been communicated to me almost in his own words. But, unfortunately, the chief's English, though innocent, and infinitely amusing to the guests, can not be repeated to a fastidious public, and, therefore, the humors of that banquet must remain for ever unrecorded. Suffice it to say, that the Frenchmen were delighted with the lion, who roared his best for their pleasure. Before Brant's leaving Philadelphia for New York, Colonel Burr gave him a note of introduction to his daughter, in which he requested her to show him every attention.

"Miss Theodosia," says Colonel Stone, who derived the information from Burr himself, "received the forest-chief with all the courtesy and hospitality suggested; and performed the honors of her father's house in a manner that must have been as gratifying to her absent parent as it was creditable to herself. Among other attentions, she gave him a dinner party, selecting for her guests some of the most eminent gentlemen in the city, among whom were Bishop Moore and Doctors Bard and Hosack. In writing to her father upon the subject, she gave a long and sprightly account of the entertainment. She said that, in making the preliminary arrangements, she had been somewhat at a loss in the selection of such dishes as would probably suit the palate of her principal guest. Being a savage warrior, and in view of the many tales she had heard, of

> "'The cannibals that each other eat,
> The anthropophagi, and men whose heads
> Do grow beneath their shoulders,'

she added, sportively, that she had a mind to lay the hospital under contribution for a human head to be served up like a boar's head in ancient hall barbaric. But, after all, she found him a most Christian and civilized guest in his manners."

During these years of greatness, Colonel Burr, like most other persons in his sphere, was an owner of slaves, who were employed as household servants. That he was a kind and considerate master to them, his letters to Theodosia, and *their* letters to him, give touching evidence. "Poor Tom," he writes of a servant who had met with an accident, "I hope you take good care of him. *If he is confined by his leg, he must pay the greater attention to his reading and writing.*" One of his letters from Philadelphia to Theodosia, concludes thus: "Alexis often bids me to send you some polite and respectful message on his part, which I have hitherto omitted. He is a faithful, good boy; upon our return home he hopes you will teach him to read." Another letter alludes pleasantly to two of his servants. "Mat's child," he tells Theodosia, "shall not be christened until you shall be pleased to indicate the time, place, manner, and name. I have promised Tom that he shall take me to Philadelphia, if there be sleighing. The poor fellow is almost crazy about it. He is importuning all the gods for snow."

He corresponded with his servants, when away from home. Their letters to him are very artless and pleasing. "We are happy to hear," says "Peggy" in one of her letters, "that Sam and George and the horses are in good order, and all the family gives their love to them." Another of Peggy's epistles concludes thus: "But, master, I wish to beg a favor of you; please to grant it. I have found there is a day-school, kept by an elderly man and his wife, near to our house, and if master is willing that I should go to it for two months, I think it would be of great service to me, and at the same time I will not neglect my work in the house, if you please, sir." Peggy received an immediate answer, granting her request. She replies in a few days: "I go to the school, since master is willing, and I like the teacher very much. He pays great attention to my learning, and I have teached Nancy her letters ever

since you have been gone, which I think will be of as much service to her as if she went to school. We are all well at present, and I hope that you are the same." She tells her master, in the same letter, that there has been a report in the paper that he had been wounded in a duel, and that the family were all very uneasy about it, though the story was not believed in the town. He replies immediately that he is perfectly well, and has had no quarrel with any one. He urges her to go to school punctually, thanks her for teaching Nancy, and says he shall soon go home and give them all New Years' presents.

All this is very amiable. There never lived, indeed, a more completely *amiable* man than Aaron Burr. Generous, thoughtful for the pleasure of others, careless of his own, a pleasant, composed, invincibly polite person, credulous even, easily taken in by plausible sharpers, but with these softer qualities relieved by courage, tact, and industry—who could have foreseen for such a character the destiny he encountered, the infamy that blackens his name?

But, in this difficult world, in this justly-ordered universe, to be amiable is not enough.

An anecdote, related with great animation by himself, of this period of his life, will suffice to indicate one of his faults against society. He was sitting in his library reading one day. A lady entered without his perceiving her, and going up softly behind his chair, gave him a slap on the cheek, saying, "Come, tell me, what little French girl, pray, have you had here?" The abruptness of the question, and the positive manner of the lady, deceived him, and he doubted not she had made the discovery. He admitted the fact. Whereupon, his fair inquisitress burst into loud laughter at the success of her artifice, which she was induced to play off upon him from the mere circumstance of having smelt musk in the room.

Upon this and other points there will be time to enlarge when we reach the expiatory years of his life. At present, we must attend to the affairs of the nation.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ERA OF BAD FEELING.

The three Periods of our History — Parties before the Revolution — Parties after the Revolution — Effect of the French Revolution upon American Politics — Hamilton — Jefferson — The tone of Society on Jefferson's return from France — The Differences between Hamilton and Jefferson — Rise of the Democratic Party — John Adams — Public Excitement in 1798.

It was the fortune of Aaron Burr to contribute, in a remarkable manner, to the first triumph of his party. That the reader, not fresh in the early history of his country, may understand the importance of that triumph, it is necessary that he should be informed or reminded of the state of parties, and the feeling of the country, and of the character of certain leading persons who flourished at that time. This chapter, then, is to be a digression—to be skipped by a reader who is in haste.

"Whig and Tory belong to natural history," Mr. Jefferson used to say. This truth, that free communities *naturally* divide into two parties, one in favor of keeping things as they are, the other strenuous for making them better than they are, simplifies the study of political history, and should always be borne in mind by the student. It is not an infallable guide through the labyrinth of party politics, but it greatly assists the groping explorer.

An historian might divide our political history into three periods. The first began with the adoption of the Constitution, and ended with the election of Jefferson; a period which, in the recent language of Mr. Seward, "gave to the country a complete emancipation of the masses from the domination of classes." The second began with Jefferson, and ended with the annexation of Texas. This was the period of peaceful democratic rule, the fruit of Jefferson's ideas and

Burr's tactics. The third period began with Texas, and will end with the final settlement of the slavery problem. We have now to do only with that eventful twelve years when the new democratic ideas contended with old Custom and old Thought in this country. It was eminently a period of "bad feeling;" as periods are apt to be in which narrow opinions, and the narrow virtues that grow out of them, are rudely assailed by the larger, half-comprehended ideas of a greater time coming. To give an adequate picture of that eventful and most interesting time would require a volume, and a genius. A few glimpses are all that can be afforded here.

Until George III. began to reign (1760), the political parties of the American colonies were about the same as those of England. John Adams, who could himself remember as far back as 1745, has a great deal to say, in his diaries and letters, about parties and partizans in America before the Revolution. Besides Whigs and Tories, he records there was a party for the *Pretender* in the colonies. One of his letters contains the following passage: "You say, our divisions began with Federalism and anti-Federalism. Alas! they began with human nature; they have existed in America from its first plantation. In every colony divisions always prevailed. In New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Massachusetts, and all the rest, *a court and country party have always contended.* Whig and Tory disputed very sharply before the Revolution, and in every step during the Revolution. Every measure in Congress, from 1774 to 1787 inclusively, was disputed with acrimony, and decided by as small majorities as any question is decided in these days."

In another letter of Mr. Adams's, the following interesting statement occurs: "It was reported and believed (in the colonies) that George II. had uniformly resisted the importunities of ministers, governors, planters, and projectors, to induce him to extend the system of taxation and revenue in America, by saying, that 'he did not understand the colonies; he wished their prosperity. They appeared to be happy at present; and he would not consent to any innovations, the consequences of which he could not foresee.'"

Sensible king! But, early in the next reign, the "ministers, governors, planters, and projectors" began to have their way; and from that moment began the history of parties in America. How slow the loyal colonists were to resist, or even to remonstrate! "No king," wrote Joseph Reed, in 1774, "ever had more loyal subjects, nor any country more affectionate colonists than the Americans *were*. I, who am but a young man, remember when the king was always mentioned with a respect approaching to adoration, and to be an *Englishman* was alone a sufficient recommendation to any office or civility. But I confess, with the greatest concern, that those happy days seem swiftly passing away."

In the year preparatory of the Revolution, Whig and Tory were words of meaning. Shall we submit? Shall we resist? The issue was marked. Beginning with a minority of one, the party for resistance gathered strength with every new aggression, till, in 1776, two thirds of the native colonists, as John Adams computed, were in favor of independency. *Two thirds!* not more; as any student of the period will soon discern. In 1777, it is questionable if the Whigs were even in a majority. We read without surprise, for human nature is human nature even in the most heroic times, that when the British army was approaching, people hastened to nail a rag of Tory *red* to their front doors, and when the patriot army marched by, the rags of the whole region turned *blue*.

The war ended. Blue was in the ascendant, and Red was nowhere. The active rich Tories fled; the active poor Tories, cowed and suppliant, became, as we have seen, a bone of contention with the exultant Whigs. Human nature asserted itself, and again there were two parties in the country. In the numberless suits and questions that arose in the State of New York respecting the property and rights of the ex-Tories, Hamilton and his Schuylers were the champions of a defeated, a prostrate faction. Burr and the Clintons were the defenders of the doctrine that to the victors belonged the spoils of victory.

Next arose the great question of the acceptance or rejec-

tion of the Constitution. After a period of doubt and struggle, the intensity of which the average modern reader can know nothing about, because the historian has not yet emerged who can tell the story, the Constitution was accepted, and set in motion. The battle then subsided, but did not cease. The anti-Federalists still clamored for amendments. They thought the central government too strong, too imposing, too British. It reduced the importance of the States. A Governor, who *had* held his head high above all men's, was an insignificant official in comparison with the PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES! The Federalists, on the contrary, thought the government fatally inefficient. It became, however, the general desire, that the Constitution, such as it was, should have, at least, a fair trial. With that feeling, Washington turned his back upon the home where he was alone a contented man, and journeyed with heavy heart to New York to organize the new government.

It must be mentioned that the country was still *very English*. Social distinctions were marked and *undisputed*, and a gentleman was a gentleman. There were great land-owners in the interior who held the position in society that country gentlemen now do in England. They had numerous tenants; they were justices of the peace; they were elected, as a matter of course, to the legislature; they were the *gentry* of the country, to whom the country, without a rebellious thought, took off its hat. "Society" in the cities was exclusive. It consisted of a few great families, who admitted within their circle only officials and other consequential persons. A gentleman was really an imposing figure at that day. Years after the Revolution, John Hancock dressed in a style that now, even upon the stage, we should think rather extravagant. Upon his powdered and pig-tailed head, he wore a cap of red velvet, which covered, without concealing, one of white cambric; the cambric being turned over the velvet, and forming a border two inches wide. A blue damask gown, lined with silk, a white stock, a white satin embroidered waistcoat, black satin breeches, white silk stockings, red morocco slippers, silver buckles at knee and instep, were other articles of his attire.

Above all there was in his manner a mingled dignity and sweetness, which was not rare at that time, but the very tradition of which is now scarcely known to the people of the United States. Politeness was one of the exclusive, superficial good things which democracy had rudely to destroy, in order that a deeper and better politeness might become possible and *universal;* a politeness without any lies in it.

The power of the "gentry" was, of course, lessened by the Revolution. They had never been a numerous class in the colonies; and the Revolution ruined perhaps one half of them. The peace drove a large number to Canada and England. The young nation, therefore, over which Washington presided, was a nation of rustics, but rustics who had, as yet, but dim perceptions of their rights and power, rustics habituated to take off their hats to gentlemen who were got up regardless of expense, and who rode about in chariots drawn by four horses, or by six.

The French Revolution woke the dozing giant.

The first delirium over, the French had to fight a continent in arms, and during that enormous contest there could not be a neutral heart. American politics, in those years, resolved themselves into this all-including question, *Which side shall we take?* Or, which nation shall our young republic adopt as ally and *exemplar*, France or England?

Fear intensified the excitement with which this question was discussed; for the nation was not yet powerful; it was a boy looking on while giants wrestled. Every one feared for the stability of the new, the untried government. Some thought it would dissolve into anarchy; others, that it would degenerate into monarchy; some lived in terror of war; others foreboded national bankruptcy. Nothing but an all-pervading and constantly-operating fear could, I think, have wrought up the two parties into such a frenzy. This generation has witnessed the landing on these shores, amid the salute of a thousand guns, and the cheers of two hundred thousand excited spectators, of the orator Kossuth. From that great furore, judge of the nation's delirium when, to its natural sympathy with a beloved nation struggling against despots,

was added a fear of being drawn into the maëlstrom of their prodigious warfare. The ardent souls, I know, desired this; as the same temperaments were for drawing the sword in defense of Hungary. But the nation knew better; knew that peace was its *only* policy. In time, too, came slights, insults, injuries, first from one belligerent, then from the other, to mingle rage with the other inflamed passions.

At the seat of government, during this excitement, there were four men of more importance than any others, as well from their great characters as their great places. These were Washington, Hamilton, Adams, and Jefferson. Of Washington I need not speak. For sixty years, the object of the undiscriminating eulogy of politicians and rhetoricians, who have sought to use his vast popularity* for their own purposes, the character of the man has been so obscured, that to only the most studious eyes can it now become discernible. By claiming for him every excellence known to human nature, his true glory is sacrificed, and the benefit of his great example squandered. But I am not to speak of him, and need not, for the part he played in this drama was more passive than active. He was the Rock to which the ship of State was moored. The great measures of his administration were devised by Hamilton, his first Secretary of the Treasury, who was the real ruler of the country during all these twelve years' of democracy's struggle for supremacy.

Alexander Hamilton was a shining specimen of a class of characters which Great Britain produces in numbers: men of administrative ability, of active, suggestive intellects, but of understandings that will not admit a revolutionary idea—that is, an idea really in advance of their time. These men wield the tools of government with dexterity; with pertinacity they cling to the old methods. Hamilton, it must be ever remembered, was no American; he never understood America; and, as he himself confessed, he was "not the man for America." The English government was his ideal; his dream was to make America a larger and better England. He was for a

* Rufus King wrote to Hamilton from London, that the most popular men in England were, first, George III., and next to him, George Washington.

strong, a regular, an imposing government; he supported General Washington in his levees, his state dinners, his speeches to Congress, his birth-day celebrations, and the other forms which reminded the Republican party of a royal court. He thought the *interested* support of the wealthy classes was necessary to a strong government. He was exactly as much of a Democrat as George III. or William Pitt. In the people he had no faith; and thought it vain to attempt to convince them by argument and fact; the mob was an unreasoning child, to be coaxed, flattered, used, and, above all, governed. This enormous BLASPHEMY against God's image he repeats, in great variety of phrase, in his private letters. "You are your own worst enemies," he once said, in a stump speech, to the people of this city.

The basis of Hamilton's moral character was noble and disinterested; no man more honorable in his feelings than he; none more generous or more kind. He loved the country of his adoption, and would have died to save it; that is, to convert it permanently to his way of thinking. He was confident that the "crazy old hulk of a Constitution," as he used to term it, could not last. A crisis was approaching. When it arrived, then the Federalists would save their country by giving it a government that could govern. But Hamilton was an honorable man: he would stand, he said, resolutely by the Constitution till the old hulk *did* go down; it should have the fairest of fair trials. He was morbidly in earnest. Gouverneur Morris, who loved the man, says, in one of his letters, "Our poor friend, Hamilton, bestrode his hobby, to the great annoyance of his friends." Hamilton had no great hold upon the people except as the man trusted and preferred by Washington. I think Washington liked him better than any man in the United States; for Hamilton, too, was an honest man, and he had, what the President had not, a rapidly-suggestive mind, and a fluent tongue. Honest, I say; but not honest as Washington was honest. In the maddest party contentions, Washington's integrity was never shaken, nor questioned, except by fools. But in the strife of parties, Hamilton did, more than once, more than twice, *advise* measures which no man will

now defend. He had the foible, so common in this country after the Revolution, of valuing himself chiefly upon his military talents. He had also the soldierly weakness with regard to women. His passions were warm, and he indulged them; but not, as is often whispered, and sometimes printed, to the extent of profligacy. He loved lovely women, and lovely women loved him. In one notorious instance, probably in other instances, his passions led him astray.

The full-length portrait of Hamilton, painted by Trumbull for the city of New York, which used to adorn the old Exchange, and was snatched, damaged, from the great fire of 1835, is preserved at the Library of the New York Historical Society. The picture is precious, and should be either restored or copied. Within these few years, Mrs. Hamilton stood before it, and pronounced it "a good likeness of the general." On the torn canvas, we discern a slight, erect, under-sized, elegant figure, with a bright, rosy face; a man, one would think, more fitted to shine on the battle-field and in the drawing-room, than in an office with a hundred clerks around him.*

A writer who saw Hamilton, describes him in these words: "He was expected one day at dinner, and was the last who came. When he entered the room, it was apparent, from the respectful attention of the company, that he was a distinguished individual. He was dressed in a blue coat, with bright buttons; the skirts of his coat were unusually long. He wore a white waistcoat, black silk small-clothes, white silk stockings. The gentleman who received him as a guest, introduced him to such of the company as were strangers to

* The bust of Hamilton by Cerracci in the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts shows us a different face. The features are good enough, but not liberally disposed; a somewhat contracted countenance, with slightly overhanging forehead, and a mass of propelling force behind the ears. There is also a miniature of Hamilton in this city, painted from life, which exhibits a sensual fullness of cheek and chin. It is an instance of the unreliableness of history, that of the six most accessible portraits of Hamilton, only two (and those the worst pictures) look as if they were designed to resemble the same person.

him; to each he made a formal bow, bending very low, the ceremony of shaking hands not being observed. The fame of Hamilton had reached every one who knew any thing of public men. His appearance and deportment accorded with the dignified distinction to which he had attained in public opinion. At dinner, whenever he engaged in the conversation, every one listened attentively. His mode of speaking was deliberate and serious; and his voice engagingly pleasant. In the evening of the same day he was in a mixed assembly of both sexes; and the tranquil reserve noticed at the dinner table, had given place to a social and playful manner, as though in this he was alone ambitious to excel."

A man thus endowed, and possessing a Scotch tenacity of purpose, can not but powerfully affect the opinions of the society of which he is a leader and an ornament. Hamilton did. Besides being the soul and intellect of the Federal party, he gave to the upper society of the cities its tone and tendency.

But there was another man of ideas, of will, and of talent, acting conspicuously upon the scene; Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State. This man, a gentleman by birth, a Democrat from conviction, a reflective philanthropist by disposition, had been abroad from 1785 to 1789, and so escaped the travail of Constitution-making. He left his country while its natural tendencies to Republicanism were at full tide. He found France heaving with the coming earthquake. With his own eyes he saw the haggard, thistle-eating peasants. With his own hand he felt and weighed the sorry morsels of black bread that mothers gave to hungry children. In his journeys through fair France, he was much in the peasants' hovels, and looked with a wrathful brother's eyes upon those mean abodes. On the sly, when the good woman's face was turned, we see this singular gentleman feeling the bed upon which he had taken care to sit, to ascertain its material and quality, and looking into the pot to see what the poor wretch was cooking for her children's dinner. His office of embassador made him a resident of châteaus and a frequenter of courts, and he could see precisely how much of natural right the puny seigneurs and stolid monseigneurs had to lord it over the sons of

toil. The "*folly of heaping importance upon idiots*" became exceedingly clear to Thomas Jefferson. He was one of those rare Americans whom a European tour has instructed and confirmed in humane principles, not effeminated and befooled.

In person, as in character, Jefferson was a contrast to Hamilton. He was a tall man, six feet one in stature, it is said; well enough proportioned, but not of a compact, energetic build. His legs were long, and seemed loose-jointed. His Welsh extraction showed itself in reddish flaxen hair, a light complexion, blue eyes, and a general Celtic cast of features. His manner, says tradition, was plain and friendly, not polished nor imposing. He was a good-tempered man, and his writings, as we see, are calm and flowing. But there was fire in Thomas Jefferson. Under the cold surface of some of his letters, we can see the lava of his convictions flowing white hot. He was no orator: he never made a speech, I believe. His influence was owing entirely to his character, his social rank, and, above all, to the accordance of his convictions with the instincts of the people of the United States. Jefferson was eminently a man of opinions, as distinguished from action, as Hamilton was a man of action, as distinguished from opinion. "Thought," says Goethe, "expands: action narrows." Jefferson had all the breadth and liberality which enlightened opinion bestows; but in devising measures and carrying on the actual business of governing a State, he would have been excelled, perhaps, by Hamilton. In the revolutionary war, the ardent, executive spirits of the country sought glory in the field. But Jefferson, the scholar, the philosopher, the jurist, remained a civilian to the last, and served his country only with his name, his mind, and his pen. This fact, in connection with another, namely, that he was only thirty years old when the war broke out, indicates the man of books. At all periods of his life, war and violence were abhorrent to this contemplative lover of his species.

It is the fashion now to underrate Mr. Jefferson. In the saloons of our Historical Societies, in the volumes of Mr. Hildreth's History of the United States, and, indeed, in most polite circles and books of the present time, the character of

the Great Democrat fares ill. The polite circles and books of the United States have never sympathized with what alone makes the United States a nation of promise. And Thomas Jefferson, like General Washington, has been for fifty years the victim of incessant eulogy. The student of history, therefore, sits down to the investigation of his life and character with a feeling of weariness and disgust, expecting to find him as complete a disappointment as other great names of that period prove to be on close examination. But no; Jefferson, to the surprise of the reader of his works, is discovered to be a person of original and solid merit. He more than shared the enlightenment of the foremost man of his age; he was in advance of his age; his country has not yet come up to Thomas Jefferson. If to General Washington, more than to any other man, this young nation owes its existence, to Thomas Jefferson, more than to any other man, it owes the peaceful preservation of its grand peculiarity. Faults, indeed, he had, and faults he committed. An inexecutive man in an executive station is sure to make mistakes. But his merits and services, immense and various, almost beyond example, fill me with gratitude and admiration—sinner as he was against my poor hero.

Longing for his native fields, Jefferson left France in the glorious year of the Bastile, and came home to Virginia. He had no misgivings about the Revolution: he understood and loved the Revolution. Before that purifying storm had burst upon an astounded world, he had watched and hailed the signs that foretold the coming vindication of the rights of man. Up to the time of his leaving France, the Revolution had worn only its nobler aspects, and he sympathized with it, heart and intellect.

He reached Virginia, and was summoned soon by General Washington to the office of Secretary of State. With unfeigned reluctance (for he was an enthusiast in agriculture) he left his ample estates and came to New York to join the new government. There he met with a surprise. But let us quote his own language:

"I returned from the French mission," says Mr. Jefferson, "in the first year of the new government, having landed

in Virginia in December, 1789, and proceeded to New York in March, 1790, to enter on the office of Secretary of State. Here, certainly, I found a state of things which, of all I had ever contemplated, I the least expected. I had left France in the first year of her Revolution, in the fervor of national rights and zeal for reformation. My conscientious devotion to those rights could not be heightened, but it had been aroused and excited by daily exercise. The President received me cordially, and my colleagues, and the circle of principal citizens, apparently with welcome. The courtesies of dinner parties given me, as a stranger newly arrived among them, placed me at once in their familiar society. But I can not describe the wonder and mortification with which the table conversations filled me. Politics were the chief topic, and a preference of kingly over republican government was evidently the favorite sentiment. An apostate I could not be, nor yet a hypocrite; and I found myself, for the most part, the only advocate on the republican side of the question."

Mr. Jefferson records part of the conversation which passed at a cabinet dinner at this period—present, himself, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Hamilton:

"After the cloth was removed, and one question argued and dismissed, conversation began on other matters, and by some circumstance was led to the British Constitution, on which Mr. Adams observed, 'Purge that constitution of its corruption, and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it would be the most perfect constitution ever devised by the wit of man.'

"Hamilton paused and said, 'Purge it of its corruption, and give to its popular branch equality of representation, and it would become an *impracticable* government: as it stands at present, with all its supposed defects, it is the most perfect government which ever existed.'

"And this was assuredly the exact line which separated the political creeds of these two gentlemen. The one was for two hereditary branches, and an honest elective one; the other, for a hereditary king, with a House of Lords and Com-

mons corrupted to his will, and standing between him and the people. Hamilton was indeed a singular character. Of acute understanding, disinterested, honest, and honorable in all private transactions, amiable in society, and duly valuing virtue in private life, yet so bewitched and perverted by the British example, as to be under thorough conviction that corruption was essential to the government of a nation. Mr. Adams had originally been a Republican. The glare of royalty and nobility, during his mission to England, had made him believe their fascination a necessary ingredient in government."

Hamilton and Jefferson could not be an harmonious pair of cabinet ministers. Hamilton hated, Jefferson loved, the French Revolution.* Hamilton approved, Jefferson detested the monarchizing forms of Washington's administrations. Hamilton was for a strong and overshadowing federal government; Jefferson was strenuous for the independence of the States. Hamilton was in favor of high salaries and a general liberality of expenditure; Jefferson, liberal with his own money, was penurious in expending the people's. Hamilton desired a powerful standing army; Jefferson was for relying chiefly upon an unpaid, patriotic militia. Hamilton would have had our embassadors live at foreign courts, in a style similar to that of the courtly representatives of kings; Jefferson was opposed to any diplomatic establishment. Hamilton had a

* Like the Bourbons, the New York Federalist learns nothing, and forgets nothing. While writing this page, my eyes wandered for a moment to the newspaper which contained Senator Wadsworth's speech on the Trinity Church question (delivered in March, 1857). Mr. Wadsworth claimed to speak as the representative of "the Jays, the Hamiltons, and the Kings," whom he evidently regards as the elect of the human race. Alluding to the gentleman who thought that the vestry of Trinity should not have unchecked control of the church's great estate, the honorable and unlearned Senator said, "Neither Jack Cade nor Ledru Rollin ever proposed any thing bolder. All Jacobinism stands without its parallel. The attacks upon the noblesse of France, when untold millions of property fell the prey of plebeian rapacity, furnishes the only fit illustration which my mind can recall to express my abhorrence of this outrageous proposition." This is eminently Hamiltonian. But for *Hamilton* to speak in that manner of the French Revolution was excusable, as he died before the labors of scores of historians and biographers had flooded that period with light.

great opinion of the importance of foreign commerce; Jefferson knew that home production and internal trade are the great sources of national wealth. Hamilton gave a polite assent to the prevailing religious creed, and attended the Episcopal Church; Jefferson was an avowed and emphatic dissenter from that creed, and went to the Unitarian chapel. And finally, Hamilton, the ex-clerk, was a very fine gentleman, and wore the very fine clothes then in vogue; Jefferson, the hereditary lord of acres, combed his hair out of pig-tail, discarded powder, wore pantaloons, fastened his shoes with strings instead of buckles, and put fine-gentlemanism utterly out of his heart for ever.

"Hamilton and I," said Jefferson, long after, "were pitted against each other every day in the cabinet, like two fighting-cocks." No wonder. They soon became, as all the world knows, personally estranged, and Hamilton, never too scrupulous in political warfare, assailed his colleague by name in the newspapers. From the cabinet the contention spread to the farthest confines of the nation, and became at length the angriest and bitterest this nation has known.

A few passages from the writings and reminiscences of the time will show the state of public feeling during this contest between the new and old ideas.

Of the excitement caused by General Washington's cool reception of absurd Genet, the French embassador, who made a triumphal progress through the country in 1793, John Adams wrote to Jefferson in after years: "You certainly never felt the terrorism excited by Genet in 1793, when ten thousand people in the streets of Philadelphia, day after day, *threatened to drag Washington out of his house*, and effect a revolution in the government, or compel it to declare war in favor of the French Revolution, and against England. The coolest and the firmest minds, even among the Quakers in Philadelphia, have given their opinions to me, that nothing but the yellow fever, which removed Dr. Hutchinson and Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant from this world, could have saved the United States from a fatal revolution of government. I have no doubt you were fast asleep, in philosophical tranquil-

lity, when ten thousand people, and perhaps many more, were parading the streets of Philadelphia on the evening of my fast day; when even Governor Mifflin himself thought it his duty to order a patrol of horse and foot to preserve the peace; when Market street was as full as men could stand by one another, and even before my door; when some of my domestics in frenzy, determined to sacrifice their lives in my defense; when all were ready to make a desperate sally among the multitude, and others were with difficulty and danger dragged back by the rest; when I myself judged it prudent and necessary to order chests of arms from the war-office to be brought through by-lanes and back doors, determined to defend my house at the expense of my life, and the lives of the few, very few domestics and friends within it."

The delirium of the public during the early years of the French Revolution, is strikingly shown in a letter which Mr. Adams wróte to his wife in 1794. "The rascally lie," wrote the Vice-President, "about *the Duke of York in a cage;* and Toulon and all the English fleet in the hands of the Republicans, was fabricated on purpose to gull the gudgeons; and it completely succeeded, to my infinite mortification. An attempt was made to get me to read the red-hot lie to the Senate, in order to throw them into as foolish a confusion as that below them; but I was too old to be taken in, at least by so gross an artifice, the falsehood of which was to me palpable." This lie, palpable as it was, not only threw the House of Representatives into confusion, but set all the bells of Philadelphia ringing, and made the city, for a few hours, the scene of vociferous rejoicing.

Graydon, in his *Memoirs* of this period, tells a story that gives us a lively idea of the popular feeling. "I remember," says he, "one day at the table of General Mifflin, at this time President of the State (Pennsylvania), when the Parisian courtezans were applauded for contributing their patriotic gifts. I ventured (Graydon was a thorough-going Federalist, and 'gentleman of the old school'), to call in question the immense merit of the proceeding. I was stared at by a pious clergyman for the shocking heterodoxy of my sentiments, and

should probably have been drawn into an altercation, no less disagreeable than indiscreet, had not the general, in a friendly manner, pacified the parson by whispering him in the ear, that I was perfectly well-disposed, and only sporting an opinion. So overwhelming was the infatuation, that even this godly personage had quite forgot that incontinency was a sin. He '*could have hugged the wicked sluts—they pleased him!*'"

During this contest between young Democracy and old Custom, a very marked change took place in the costume, the manners, and the minor morals of the people. The feeling of equality expressed itself in dress. John Jay, among others, alludes, in one of his letters, to the effect of the French Revolution in banishing silk stockings and high breeding from the land. Pantaloons became the outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible republicanism. Hair-powder, pig-tails, and shoe-buckles began to disappear; and the polite observances that had grown out of the old-world distinctions of rank, were discontinued by the more ardent republicans. The recently published *Recollections* of Peter Parley, contain much precious and pleasantly-given information respecting the gradual change that came over the spirit of the country in the time of Jefferson. The excellent Parley is a sad Federalist, it is true, and his sympathies are much more with the good old time, than with the better new time; but he is a faithful and agreeable narrator. Before the Jeffersonian era, he tells us, travelers who met on the highway saluted each other with formal and dignified courtesy; and children stopped, as they passed a grown person, and made the bow they had been practiced in at school for such occasions. But as democracy spread, these grand salutations "first subsided into a vulgar nod, half ashamed and half impudent, and then, like the pendulum of a dying clock, totally ceased."

Another little fact mentioned by Mr. Goodrich is significant. "Pounds, shillings, and pence," says he, "were classical, and dollars and cents vulgar, for several succeeding generations. 'I would not give a penny for it,' was genteel; 'I would not give a cent for it,' was plebeian." Among the benefits bestowed upon the country by Jefferson, one was its

admirable currency; which, if he did not invent, he so advocated as to insure its adoption.

A ludicrous anecdote related by the same author, though of a somewhat later stage of the democratic triumph, has an historic value. "A Senator of the United States," says Mr. Goodrich, "once told me that at this period all the barbers of Washington were Federalists, and he imputed it to the fact that the leaders of that party in Congress wore powder and long queues, and of course had them dressed every day by the barber. The Democrats, on the contrary, wore short hair, or, at least, small queues, tied up carelessly with a ribbon, and therefore gave little encouragement to the tonsorial art. One day, as the narrator told me, while he was being shaved by the leading barber of the city—who was, of course, a Federalist—the latter suddenly and vehemently burst out against the nomination of Madison for the presidency by the democratic party, which had that morning been announced. 'Dear me!' said the barber, 'surely this country is doomed to disgrace and shame. What Presidents we might have, sir! Just look at Daggett, of Connecticut, or Stockton, of New Jersey! What queues they have got, sir—as big as your wrist, and powdered every day, sir, like real gentlemen as they are. Such men, sir, would confer dignity upon the chief magistracy; but this little Jim Madison, with a queue no bigger than a pipe-stem! sir, it is enough to make a man forswear his country!'"

The reader, I hope, is one of those who will see in these extracts proof that what democracy destroyed was either *sham*, or so mingled with sham, as to be inseparable from it. But many of our sedate and stately forefathers could not see this. Jefferson was a name of horror in New England for many a year; clergymen preached against him, and prayed against him, even by name.

There was great activity of mind at this time. At the beginning of the revolutionary war, there were forty newspapers published in the colonies. The number had not increased when the Constitution was adopted, in 1787. During Washington's first term, several new papers were started, but

in his second term, and in the first half of Adams's administration, the number of newspapers doubled. There were more daily papers published in Philadelphia in 1798 than there are in 1857. In the heat of the warfare between the Federalists and Republicans, the political papers went rabid, and foamed personalities and lies.

What Jefferson says of the press, after some years of this madness had spoiled it for every good purpose, may be quoted here:

"Nothing," wrote Mr. Jefferson, in 1807, "can now be believed which is seen in a newspaper. Truth itself becomes suspicious by being put into that polluted vehicle. The real extent of this state of misinformation is known only to those who are in situations to confront facts within their knowledge with the lies of the day. I really look with commiseration over the great body of my fellow-citizens, who, reading newspapers, live and die in the belief that they have known something of what has been passing in the world in their time; whereas the accounts they have read in newspapers are just as true a history of any other period of the world as of the present, except that the real names of the day are affixed to their fables. General facts may indeed be collected from them, such as that Europe is now at war, that Bonaparte has been a successful warrior, that he has subjected a great portion of Europe to his will, etc., etc.; but no details can be relied on. I will add, that the man who never looks into a newspaper is better informed than he who reads them; inasmuch as he who knows nothing is nearer to truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehood and errors. He who reads nothing will still learn the great facts, and the details are all false.

"Perhaps an editor might begin a reformation in some such way as this: Divide his paper into four chapters, heading the 1st. Truths, 2d. Probabilities, 3d. Possibilities, 4th. Lies. The first chapter would be very short, as it would contain little more than authentic papers, and information from such sources as the editor would be willing to risk his own reputation for their truth. The second would contain what, from a mature consideration of all circumstances, his judgment should con-

clude to be probably true. This, however, should rather contain too little than too much. The third and fourth should be professedly for those readers who would rather have lies for their money than the blank paper they would occupy."

Jefferson, however, knew the value of the press, and the services it *had* rendered. He wrote the passage just quoted after the great fight was over, and before the press had begun to recover from the demoralization which is one of the results of warfare. In 1793, when Washington seemed to wish Jefferson to dismiss Captain Freneau (democratic editor-in-chief) from the post of translating clerk to the Secretary of State (salary, two hundred and fifty dollars a year), Jefferson said to one of his intimates: "I won't turn him out. His paper has done more to save the democratic system than any thing else."

The period which I have called the "era of bad feeling," began with those game-cock encounters between Jefferson and Hamilton in the cabinet of General Washington, and continued, with yearly-increasing acrimony, till democracy and Jefferson triumphed in 1800. The struggle would naturally have lasted longer, for Federalism had immense advantages, and every new horror of the French Revolution was strength to the party that had always denounced it. The two circumstances which, more than all others, hastened the republican triumph, were, as it seems to me, Burr's management, and John Adams's want of management. The part which Burr played in effecting the discomfiture of Hamilton and his party, will be stated fully in the next chapter. Here, a few words respecting Adams may be permitted.

Glorious, delightful, honest John Adams! An American John Bull! The Comic Uncle of this exciting drama! The reader, if a play-goer, knows well the fiery old gentleman who goes blustering and thundering about the stage, grasping his stick till it quivers, throwing the lovers into a terrible consternaion, hurrying on the catastrophe he is most solicitous to prevent, pluming himself most of all upon his sagacity, while he alone is blind to what is passing under his very nose! Such is something like the impression left upon the mind of

one who becomes familiar with the characters of this period, respecting the man who, as Franklin well said, was always honest, often great, and sometimes mad. Think of a President of the United States, who, while his countrymen were in the temper of 1797 and 1798, could, in a public address, allude to his having had the *honor* once to stand in the presence of the British king! It is simply amusing now to read of his having done so; but, to the maddened Republicans of that era, it seemed the last degree of abject pusillanimity toward England, and arrogant insult to the people of America. Think also of a President of the United States who could see, without interference, a fellow-citizen prosecuted, convicted, and fined a hundred dollars, for *wishing* that the wadding of a certain cannon, fired to salute the President as he passed through Newark, had lodged upon an ample part of the President's ample person! One of his own cabinet told Hamilton that the "chief was a man who, whether sportful, playful, witty, kind, cold, drunk, sober, angry, easy, stiff, jealous, careless, cautious, confident, close, or open, is so almost always in the wrong place, and to the wrong persons." Alien laws, sedition laws, and stamp duties, came naturally enough to such a President.

John Adams must never be judged by his administration. None of the men of the Revolution came out of the storm and stress of our era of bad feeling quite unscathed. It was too much for human nature. In the revolutionary period, this high-mettled game-cock of a John Adams appeared to glorious advantage, made a splendid show of fight, animated the patriotic heart, and gave irresistible impetus to the cause. But he was ludicrously unfitted to preside with dignity and success over a popular government, which must do every thing with an eye to its effect upon the people. His own cabinet intrigued against him. They regarded Hamilton as their real chief; and Hamilton, far more than Adams, *was* the influencing mind of the government. One who would understand and like John Adams must read his Diaries and Letters; which, of all the writings of that time, are the most human and entertaining. Pickwick is not funnier. Pickwick, in the

office of prime minister of England, would not have been more the wrong man in the wrong place than John Adams was in the chair of Washington.

Adams and Hamilton agreed in one thing, abhorrence of the French Revolution; and in another, admiration of the English government; and in another, distrust of the masses of the people. "You thought," said Adams to a correspondent, "the French Revolution a minister of grace: I knew it to be, from the first, a goblin damned." One of his letters to his wife contains a characteristic passage on equality. "By the law of nature," he writes, "all men are men, and not angels —men, and not lions—men, and not whales—men, and not eagles—that is, they are all of the same species; and this is the most that the equality of man amounts to. A physical inequality, an intellectual inequality, of the most serious kind, is established unchangeably by the Author of nature; and *society has a right to establish any other inequalities it may judge necessary for its good.* The precept, however, *do as you would be done by*, implies an equality which is the real equality of nature and Christianity."

In one word, John Adams was not in unison with the humor of the age; and, being a passionate, dogmatical, obstinate John Bull of a man, he took not the slightest pains to conceal the fact, or to conciliate the people with whom he had to do. During his presidency it was, that party animosities reached their height. He was elected by a very small plurality. The Republicans of 1796 were nearly as much elated and encouraged by their defeat as were the Republicans of 1856 by theirs. Events in France gave the President signal advantages, which another man would have turned to such account as to secure the supremacy of his party for years after. Adams continued to fan the flames of party spirit by all that he did, and by all that he did not do.

The state of public feeling in 1797 and 1798, may be inferred from these sentences from the letters of Thomas Jefferson: "The passions are too high at present to be cooled in our day. You and I have formerly seen warm debates and high political passions. But gentlemen of different politics

would then speak to each other, and separate the business of the Senate from that of society. It is not so now. Men who have been intimate all their lives, cross the street to avoid meeting, and turn their heads another way, lest they should be obliged to touch their hats." To another friend he writes: "At this moment, all the passions are boiling over, and one who keeps himself cool and clear of the contagion, is so far below the point of ordinary conversation that he finds himself insulated in every society." To another: "The interruption of letters is becoming so notorious, that I am forming a resolution of declining correspondence with my friends through the channels of the post-office altogether."

With these very miscellaneous and inadequate notices of the stirring and eventful period during which America became America, we must resume the story of the man whose diligence and tact assisted the people of the United States to realize their fond desire for a government which should truly represent *them*, and heartily execute *their* will.

CHAPTER XIV.

MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY AGAIN.

BURR RETIRES FROM THE SENATE — THE FEDERALISTS IN POWER — PRE-EMINENT POSITION OF HAMILTON — BURR IN THE ASSEMBLY — HIS PREPARATORY MANEUVERS — HAMILTON OPPOSES BURR'S APPOINTMENT TO A GENERALSHIP — THE ARMY — THE MANHATTAN BANK AFFAIR — BURR'S FIRST DUEL, AND ITS CAUSE.

IN *Greenleaf's New York Journal and Patriotic Register* for February 2d, 1797, amid whole pages ablaze with the victories of Bonaparte's Italian campaign, and bristling with the short, sharp bulletins and proclamations of that portentous conqueror, may still be seen a little paragraph which records, in the fewest words possible, an event of some interest to us, which had taken place in Albany *nine* days before. The paragraph reads thus: "On the 24th ult., Philip Schuyler was unanimously (excepting one vote in the Assembly and one in the Senate) elected to the office of Senator of the United States by the two Houses of the legislature of this State, for six years, from the 4th of March next, on which day the seat of Aaron Burr, one of our present Senators in Congress, becomes vacant."

The services of the old soldier, then, were recognized at last. The Federalists were in the ascendant, and the Republicans, as I conjecture, chose to gratify a war-worn veteran with their votes, rather than throw them away upon a candidate of their own party. Schuyler was touched with the unanimity of the vote. He was a member of the State Senate at the time, and he took occasion to express his feelings in a short speech, full of honest, manly feeling.

The Federalists, as just observed, were in the ascendant in the State of New York. John Jay was governor. He had recovered much of the popularity lost by negotiating that

famous treaty with Great Britain, for defending which on the stump Hamilton had been hooted and stoned in the streets of New York a year before. The party looked strong, and was strong. France had become a by-word and a taunt, to which the Republicans had hardly the faith or face to reply. The Federalists had only to use their victory in a conciliatory spirit, and the State was permanently their own.

One important loss, however, they had sustained, which led afterward to other damaging defections. The Livingstons had gone over, *en famille*, to the Republican party. The story is, that the family were chagrined, that Chancellor Livingston, who had powerfully assisted both to form the Constitution and to get it adopted, should have been overlooked in the distribution of the great offices; a circumstance which they attributed to the jealous enmity of Hamilton. The irate Chancellor, it is said, caused the family to be convened; and from that evening, it was observed, the Livingstons, except some remote and rural members of the family, voted and acted with the Republicans. Accordingly, we find the Chancellor, at the banquet given in New York in 1796, to celebrate the ninth anniversary of the alliance between France and the United States, offering the following toast: "May the present coolness between France and America produce, like the quarrels of lovers, a renewal of love."

If this account of the cause of Chancellor Livingston's change of politics be correct—and it is given by Dr. Hammond, the charitable historian of New York parties, on what he states to be high authority—it only proves that General Washington was right in thinking Chancellor Livingston an unfit person for the office of Chief Justice of the United States. Let us admit, however, that the opinion was general, at that time, that Hamilton used his influence with Washington to crush the enemies and rivals of the house of Schuyler, and it was doubtless trying to feudal human nature for the head of the Livingstons to see himself debarred from coveted distinction by a foreign adventurer's influential word.

Hamilton was now approaching the summit of his career. Triumphant in his own State, strengthened at Philadelphia by

the election of his father-in-law to the Senate, known to be the favorite of the nation's favorite, the unquestioned leader, though not the head of the dominant party, and the confidential adviser of the cabinet, Hamilton was playing a great part in the national affairs. It has been before remarked, that, during the first twelve years of the young nation's existence, it was he who really administered the government. For four years, as Secretary of the Treasury, he devised the great measures; for four years, as Washington's adviser and word-furnisher, as popular essayist and party-intriguer, he supported the system himself had created; for four years, his was the mind to which Mr. Adams's ministers looked for suggestion and advice. Candid John Adams, when all was over, declared, that during his presidency, Hamilton was "commander-in-chief of the House of Representatives, of the Senate, of the heads of Department, of General Washington, and last, and least, if you will, of the President of the United States." He had won distinction in many of the pursuits, wherein to excel is counted peculiarly honorable First, orator and pamphleteer; then soldier, lawyer, statesman, author, in swift succession, and in each capacity unrivaled. In society too, who so welcome as the young and handsome chief of the gentlemen's party, who knew how to lay aside in the drawing room the cares of State, and to charm the gentler sex with the grace of his manners, the sprightliness of his wit, the warmth of his homage? What wonder that the amiable man should have felt his importance. Let it be ever remembered, to his honor, that through all these years of success and glory, his most constant thought was for the supremacy of the *system* which he conscientiously believed to be essential to the prosperity, and even to the prolonged existence of the Union.

The election of Schuyler to the Senate could not, of course, take Colonel Burr by surprise. Before that event was announced, he had matured plans for getting the State of New York out of the hands of Hamilton and the Federalists. His first step was to secure his own election to the State legislature, which was the easier from the fact that the city, even then, was more inclined than the rural counties to the demo-

cratic party. Accordingly, General Schuyler, about the time he was conning his speech of thanks to the State Senate for their suffrages, wrote to Hamilton, in alarm, to the following effect: "Mr. Burr, we are informed, will be a candidate for a seat in the Assembly; his views it is not difficult to appreciate. They alarm me, and if he prevails, *I apprehend a total change of politics in the next Assembly*—attended with other disagreeable consequences."

He did prevail. But nothing particular came of it, so far as could be seen by the uninitiated eye. In the years 1797 and 1798, Colonel Burr seemed absorbed in law and speculation. To a great extent he was so. His inactivity was even a subject of complaint with some members of the party; but it is probable that his unnoticed exertions during those two years contributed as much to the final victory as his more obvious efforts at a later day. With the people, a presidential campaign means merely the few months of turmoil just previous to the election; but the politician knows that the first three years of a presidential term, when the people are occupied with their own pursuits, is the period for *him* to maneuver in. This was more the case then than now, because then only freeholders voted, and leading individuals had far more control over votes than they can have where universal suffrage prevails. The fact, too, that presidential electors were chosen, not by the people, but by the legislature, gave an immense opportunity to a man skilled in political management.

In a political assembly, though on a test question one party may be sure of a majority, yet there will always be a certain number of men whose partizan feelings are weak, and who are therefore open to influence. It was upon these intermediate members that Colonel Burr knew how to play, particularly the influential country members, who brought to Albany the purest intentions, unsophisticated minds, and an inflammable vanity. A member of uncouth manners, and homespun dress, whom a dainty Federalist would have thought beneath his notice, Burr was aware might be the great man of a western county, and carry its vote in his pocket. Such a member, bursting with desire perhaps to hear his own voice in the

chamber, and to show his constituents his name in the newspapers, Colonel Burr would request to introduce a resolution, or to do some other formal business, that would flatter his sense of personal consequence. Judge Peck, for example, was subjected to this kind of treatment. Burr was extremely desirous, for a while, that the presidential electors should be chosen directly by the people, as he supposed the State could be more easily revolutionized in that way. Peck was selected to introduce the resolutions asking for a committee on the subject, though there were a dozen members better able to support them.

"Judge Peck," says Dr. Hammond,* "although a clear-headed, sensible man, was an uneducated emigrant from Connecticut. His appearance was diminutive, and almost disgusting. In religion he was fanatical, but in his political views he was sincere, persevering, and bold; and, though meek and humble in his personal demeanor, he was by no means destitute of personal ambition. He was an itinerant surveyor in the county of Otsego, then a new and uncultivated part of the State. He would survey your farm in the day time, exhort and pray in your family by night, and talk on politics the rest of the time. Perhaps on Sunday, or some evening in the week, he would preach a sermon in your school-house. No man knew better the political importance of such a man, in a society organized as the society of the western counties then was, than Colonel Burr, and he spared no pains to cause Mr. Peck to be identified with the Republican party. Various anecdotes have been related to me, which exhibit the care which Colonel Burr took to shape trifling matters in such a way as to act on the mind of Judge Peck and others, so as to produce the great result at which he aimed. The selection of Judge Peck to offer the electoral resolutions, flattered his vanity; it called out upon him the malediction of leading Federalists; and in that way widened the breach between him and his old political friends. Mr. Burr, it is said, with equal skill and perseverance, applied himself to General German, then a plain, but strong-minded and highly popular farmer of

* History of Political Parties in the State of New York.

Chenango. The support of the democratic cause by these two men was of great importance to the success of the Republican party in April, 1800. I do not think it too much to say, that had it not been for the papers circulated by Judge Peck and General German, and their personal exertion and influence, the western district, in the year 1800, would have been Federal."

The electoral scheme failed in the Senate, through the opposition of the Federal Senators, and nothing remained for the Republicans but to concentrate their efforts upon securing a Republican majority in the legislature to be chosen in April, 1800. Before entering upon that campaign, there are a few personal incidents of Burr's life at this period to be related.

In the summer of 1797, Monroe and Hamilton had an angry correspondence growing out of Hamilton's amour with Mrs. Reynolds. A duel at one time appeared inevitable, and Monroe named Colonel Burr as his second. The affair, however, was otherwise arranged.

In the winter of 1798, Colonel Burr sat in the Assembly at Albany, engaged in pushing private bills, and preparing the way for future operations. A grand *coup* which he had meant to try at this session, was, for reasons now unknown, deferred till the next.

The year 1798 was the time when the insolence of the French Directory toward the United States provoked the government to measures of retaliation, which, for the moment, were concurred in by a great majority of the people, and gave an imposing show of strength to the Federal party. An army was voted; General Washington was named commander-in-chief; Hamilton was made his second in command; a number of brigadiers were appointed. That there might be no sign wanting of coming war, a commercial revulsion set in, and the prisons, as Jefferson records, were full of the most reputable merchants. Hamilton, now inspector-general, was the foremost man of all the nation (for Washington was to take command only in case of actual hostilities), and about the first use he made of his new authority, was to defeat the honorable ambition of Colonel Burr for a military appoint-

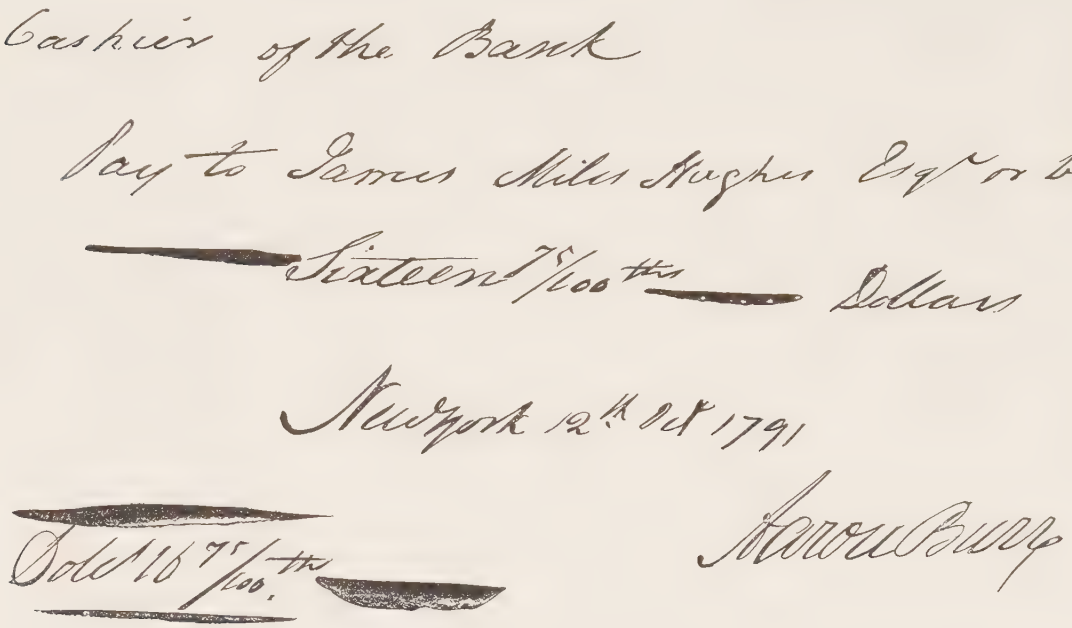
ment. In the lately published tenth volume of the works of John Adams, there is a long letter upon Hamilton's intrigues, written in 1815, in which occurs the following statement respecting this matter:

"I have never known," wrote the ex-President, "in any country, the prejudice in favor of birth, parentage, and descent more conspicuous than in the instance of Colonel Burr. That gentleman was connected by blood with many respectable families in New England. He was the son of one president, and the grandson of another president of Nassau Hall, or Princeton University; the idol of all the Presbyterians in New York, New England, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and elsewhere. He had served in the army, and came out of it with the character of a knight without fear, and an able officer. He had afterward studied and practiced law with application and success. Buoyed up on those religious partialities, and this military and juridical reputation, it is no wonder that Governor Clinton and Chancellor Livingston should take notice of him. They made him Attorney-General, and the legislature sent him to Congress, as a Senator, where he served, I believe, six years. At the next election he was, however, left out; and being at that time somewhat embarrassed in his circumstances, and reluctant to return to the bar, he would have rejoiced in an appointment in the army. In this situation, I proposed to General Washington, in a conference between him and me, and through him to the triumvirate (Washington, Hamilton, and Pinckney) to nominate Colonel Burr for a brigadier-general. Washington's answer to me was, 'By all that I have known and heard, Colonel Burr is a brave and able officer; but the question is, whether he has not equal talents at intrigue?' How shall I describe to you my sensations and reflections at that moment. He had compelled me to promote, over the heads of Lincoln, Clinton, Gates, Knox, and others, and even over Pinckney, one of his own triumvirates, the most restless, impatient, artful, indefatigable, and unprincipled intriguer in the United States, if not in the world, to be second in command under himself, and now dreaded an intriguer in a poor brigadier! He did, how-

ever, propose it to the triumvirate, at least to Hamilton. But I was not permitted to nominate Burr. If I had been, what would have been the consequences? Shall I say that Hamilton would have been now alive, and Hamilton and Burr now at the head of our affairs? What then? If I had nominated Burr without the consent of the triumvirate, a negative in Senate was certain."

The biographer of John Adams (the grandson of that impetuous old patriot), gives other particulars. He says that during the presidency of Mr. Adams, while the French excitement was at its height, and war seemed certain, Hamilton, Knox, and C. C. Pinckney were nominated as next in rank to General Washington in the army then forming. But it was left uncertain who of the three should be the second in command. The Federalists clamored for Hamilton. (Hamilton himself declared, in effect, that he would accept of nothing less.) The President invited Washington to decide the question. But between the general's preference for Hamilton, and his reluctance to wound the feelings of the veteran Knox, he hesitated so long that the intriguers of Adams's cabinet adopted an expedient to hasten his decision. "In the casual conversations of the cabinet," says Mr. Francis Adams, "the President had let drop some intimation of a wish to give a share of the commissions to leading military men of the opposition. Among the names mentioned by him were those of Aaron Burr, and Peter Muhlenburg, of Pennsylvania. Knowing the strong dislike entertained of the former by Washington, intimations were soon given him of the tendencies of the President, and the possibility that he might be liable to have Burr forced upon him as quarter-master-general, or in some other confidential post." This was enough. Hamilton was soon named second in command, and Knox resigned in disgust.

Thus, again, Hamilton triumphed, and in a signal manner, over his rival, whom, indeed, he seemed now to have finally distanced. From a story told by General Wilkinson, who visited New York about this time, we may infer that Hamilton himself had come to regard Burr in the light of a spent poli-


Cashier of the Bank
Pay to James Miles Hughes Esqr or bearer
Sixteen 7/100ths Dollars
New York 12th Oct 1791
Aaron Burr
Sold 16 7/100ths

FAC-SIMILE OF A CHECK DRAWN BY AARON BURR IN 1791.

tician. Wilkinson paid his respects to General Hamilton as soon as he arrived in the city, when the following conversation took place between the two officers:

"Well, sir," said Wilkinson, "having fatigued you with my prattle, I now propose to visit an old friend whom I have not seen for several years; but I hope there is no disagreement between you which might render the renewal of my acquaintance with him indecorous to my superior officer."

Hamilton asked if he meant Colonel Lamb.

"No," said Wilkinson, "Colonel Burr."

"Little Burr!" exclaimed Hamilton, "O no; we have always been opposed in politics, but always on good terms. We set out in the practice of the law at the same time, and took opposite political directions. Burr beckoned me to follow him, and I advised him to come with me. We could not agree, but I fancy he now begins to think he was wrong and I was right."

This is in a different strain from the "*embryo Cæsar*" epistle of a few years before; but Hamilton was now talking to Burr's particular friend, his brother aid-de-camp in the Quebec expedition, and his confidential correspondent ever since. Besides, he only said he was on "good terms" with "little Burr." The tone of condescending superiority and conscious triumph in the words used by Hamilton in speaking of Burr, is the noticeable feature of Wilkinson's story.

At the next session of the legislature, 1799, Colonel Burr obtained a signal advantage over the wealthy Federalists of the city.

At that time there was, besides a branch of the Bank of the United States, but one banking institution in the city of New York, and that was controlled by Federalists, who, as the Republicans alleged, used their powers for the furtherance of the Federal cause. Both of these banks were, to a considerable degree, the creation of General Hamilton, and both were inclined to support and advance the author of their existence. The Republican merchants, it is said, had long been accustomed to see their Federal competitors "accommodated" by the banks, while their own applications for aid were supercil-

iously refused; and it was their cherished scheme to establish a bank which should be as complaisant toward them as the "Bank of New York" was supposed to be to traders of the other party. But this was difficult. Besides a chronic prejudice against banks in the popular mind, they had to contend against a Federal majority in the legislature, which alone could grant a charter. In these circumstances, Colonel Burr, by an ingenious maneuver, accomplished what, by direct means, could not have been done.

The yellow fever had recently made dreadful ravages in the city, and impressed upon the people the importance of securing a supply of better water than that furnished by the brackish wells in the lower part of the island. Burr availed himself of this state of public feeling. The legislature were asked to charter the *Manhattan Company*, formed for the ostensible purpose of supplying the city with water, but the real object of which was to supply Republicans with the sinews of war. It was uncertain, the petitioners said, how much capital the proposed water-works would require, but as it was highly desirable not to risk failure by a deficiency of capital, they asked authority to raise two millions of dollars. In all probability, they added, this would be too much, and, therefore, they proposed to insert in the charter a provision that "*the surplus capital might be employed in any way not inconsistent with the laws and Constitution of the United States, or of the State of New York.*" The bill passed both Houses as a matter of course, few members even so much as reading it, and none, except those who were in the secret, suspecting that "Manhattan Company" meant *Manhattan Bank.* Burr gained great applause among the leading Republicans for his adroitness in this affair, but he lost character with the people, and the act stands justly condemned in the records of the time.

These are the naked facts of the affair; but there were palliating circumstances, beside the alleged misuse of the capital of the other bank. It was proposed in the select committee of the Senate, to which the bill was referred, to strike out the clause relating to the use of the surplus capital; where-

upon a member of the committee applied to Colonel Burr for an explanation. Burr avowed the design of using the surplus capital to establish a bank, or an East India Company, or any thing else the directors might choose, since merely furnishing a city of fifty thousand inhabitants with water would not remunerate the stockholders. The bill was afterward referred to the Chief Justice of the State, who advised its rejection on account of the unlimited powers conferred by the surplus clause. Means were found, however, to overrule his objections, and Governor Jay signed the bill. Nevertheless, the great fact remains, that, in this business, Colonel Burr sought one object under cover of another, a kind of political management which can never be commended, and seldom excused.

Whether any show was ever made of bringing in the water, does not appear; but the *bank* was immediately established, and soon became an institution of the first importance. And though it was one of the engines of Burr's political destruction, yet, in after years, when he was obscure and powerless, the Manhattan bank, as I have been told, was not unmindful of the man to whom it owed its establishment, and showed him favors which it would not have granted to any other in his situation.

The immediate effect of the Manhattan affair was injurious to the Republican party. In the spring of 1799, Burr was a candidate for reëlection to the Assembly; but before the election occurred, the secret of the Manhattan company escaped, and a prodigious clamor arose. A pamphlet appeared denouncing banks in general, and in particular the means by which Burr had sprung a new one upon a bank-fearing city. The newspapers took up the story, and meetings denounced the dexterous maneuver. The result was, that Burr lost his election, and, what was worse, the whole Republican ticket was defeated, and the Republican cause, which before had been gaining ground, received an ominous check. This was the more serious from the fact that, in twelve months more, the legislature was to be elected upon which would devolve the duty of choosing presidential electors!

In the summer of 1799, Colonel Burr fought his first duel. There was a piece of scandal set afloat in the State, to the effect that, for legislative services rendered, the Holland Land Company had canceled a bond held against Burr for twenty thousand dollars. A gentleman named John B. Church, had spoken with so much freedom respecting the rumor, as to elicit from the slandered legislator a challenge to mortal combat. At Hoboken, on the 2d of September, the parties met, attended by their seconds and a surgeon. A ridiculous incident varied the well-known routine of the proceedings, and furnished the town-gossip with a joke and a by-word for many a day. Before leaving home, Colonel Burr had been particular to explain to his second, Judge Burke, of South Carolina, that the balls were cast too small for his pistols, and that chamois leather, cut to the proper size, must be greased and put round them to make them fit. Leather and grease were placed in the case with the pistols. After the principals had been placed, Burr noticed Judge Burke vainly endeavoring to drive in the ramrod with a stone, and at once suspected that the grease had been forgotten. A moment after, the pistol was handed to him. With that singular coolness which he was wont to exhibit at critical moments, he drew the ramrod, felt of the ball, and told the judge it was not home.

"I know it," replied the second, wiping the perspiration from his face, "I forgot to grease the leather; but, you see, your man is ready; don't keep him waiting. Just take a crack as it is, and I'll grease the next."

Shots were exchanged without effect. Mr. Church then made the requisite apology, and the parties returned to the city in the highest good humor.

This affair of the Holland Company's bond was never explained to the public by Colonel Burr, though the means of doing so were at hand. He never in his life took pains to refute a calumny in a public manner, or showed much regard for what is called public opinion. This was both a point of pride and a constitutional peculiarity. It was a quality which alone must, some time or other, have made him an unavailable can-

didate for an office in the gift of the people; for the attainment of popularity in a republic, is a study, a pursuit, a thing about which a man must never be careless. Hence in republics, after the old virtue is exhausted, and before the new virtue acquires strength, only nonentities and hypocrites are available; since, to true men, the very idea of seeking popularity is loathsome. Burr was not, indeed, a downright *straight-forward* politician, such as every one admires and no one supports; but he never descended to the mean arts of making personal capital.

With regard to this scandal, he had but to show that the canceling of the bond was a perfectly legitimate transaction, by which he lost, not gained—facts known to half a dozen persons whose word no one would have doubted—and it would never more have been mentioned to his discredit. But this slight concession his pride refused. To a friend who asked for an explanation, he stated the facts of the case, and added these words: "This, sir, is the first time in my life that I have condescended (pardon the expression) to refute a calumny. I leave it to my actions to speak for themselves, and to my character to confound the fictions of slander. And on this very subject I have not up to this hour given one word of explanation to any human being. All the explanation that can be given amounts to no more than this—*That the thing is an absolute and abominable lie.*"

It does not appear that his silence with regard to the rumor did any perceptible damage to Burr at the time. Before his own party his character shone with all its previous luster, and no well-informed Federalist could believe a story so groundless and improbable. Nevertheless, *any* whisper against a man's honor, whether probable or improbable, whether believed or scouted, prepares the way for the slanders that blast his good name for ever.

The circumstances of Colonel Burr at this time were, as Mr. Adams stated, embarrassed. This was chiefly owing to the unfortunate issue of certain land speculations in which he had participated, and to his devotion to politics. His practice, however, was so large that, with proper care and average for-

tune, he would have recovered his losses, and founded an estate. But just now, more than ever, there was a demand for all the resources of his mind in preparing for the impending struggle between the two great parties. To this contest he had devoted himself.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ELECTION OF 1800.

Gloomy Prospects of the Republicans — Burr Confident — Federal Errors — Arrest of Judge Peck — Hamilton's Scheme for Cheating the People — John Adams's Narrative — Burr's Tactics — He Wins over General Gates — Judge Livingston and Governor Clinton — Hamilton and Burr at the Polls — The Victory — Hamilton's Unworthy Expedients — Burr Frustrates them — The Tie Between Jefferson and Burr.

It was Aaron Burr who taught the democratic party how to conquer.

The prospect was gloomy. As the time for choosing presidential electors drew near, it became apparent that the State of New York would decide the contest in the Union, and that the city would decide the contest in the State. To every leading Republican in the country, except one, defeat looked inevitable. John Jay, in 1798, had been elected governor over Chancellor Livingston by a majority of 2,382, which was then a great majority. In 1799, the Republican ticket in the city, headed by the name of Aaron Burr, had been defeated by a majority of 900. In April, 1800, the electing legislature was to be chosen. Jefferson might well say, as he did say, one month before the New York election, that he considered the contest *more* doubtful than that of 1796. But Burr would not admit the idea of failure. He breathed the fire of his own sanguine disposition into the hearts of his followers, and kept every faculty on the alert to take instant advantage of the enemy's mistakes.

His house became the rendezvous of the more ardent and resolute members of the party, who were proud of their chief, and confident that in the abounding resources of his ingenious intellect alone lay the means of victory. Mr. Davis tells us that this devoted band was composed of young men of gal-

lant bearing and disinterested views, who beheld in Colonel Burr a patriot hero of the Revolution, who had mingled with their fathers on the battle-field, and periled his all in their country's cause. In this circle no local or personal interests were allowed to be discussed. One object alone was ever mentioned or considered, and that was the triumph of the Republican party. The talents, the energy, the reckless courage, and the reckless generosity of the young politicians, whom the fascinating manner and chivalrous sentiments of Colonel Burr had attracted and leagued around him, are testified to by many writers of the time.

Then it was that the party began to submit to that *discipline* which gave it twenty-five years of victory. "All who numbered themselves as its members," says Professor Renwick (*Life of De Witt Clinton*), "were required to yield implicit obedience to the will of its majority; that majority was made to move at the beck of committees, which concentrated the power in the hands of a few individuals. Denunciation as a traitor was the fate of him who ventured to act in conformity to his individual opinion, when it did not meet with the general sanction." This omnipotent organization was not completed in a campaign, but it began in 1799, and grew out of the precepts and the example of Aaron Burr and his 'myrmidons.'

The efforts of Burr and his friends were most opportunely assisted by the errors of the Federalists. The government was exasperating a loyal nation by its stringent enforcement of the Alien and Sedition Laws. Thirty thousand Frenchmen and five thousand "United Irishmen," refugees from political storms at home, now felt themselves unsafe in the land which had been extolled as the asylum for the oppressed of all nations. They were loud and furious against the law which empowered the President to banish aliens whom *he* should deem dangerous to the peace of the United States. Among the victims of the Sedition Law was the pious politician, Judge Peck, who was prosecuted for merely *circulating* a bitterly-worded *petition* for the repeal of the odious laws. Nothing better could have happened for the Republicans. A bench-

warrant was issued. Peck was arrested in Otsego, and conveyed all the way to New York, affording to the State an unparalleled and rousing spectacle. "A hundred missionaries in the cause of democracy," remarks Dr. Hammond, "stationed between New York and Cooperstown, could not have done so much for the Republican cause as the journey of Judge Peck, as a prisoner, from Otsego to New York. It was nothing less than the public exhibition of a suffering martyr for the freedom of speech and the press, and the right of petitioning, to the view of the citizens of the various places through which the marshal traveled with his prisoner."

Yet such was the horror of democracy in the northern States, after the total failure of the French Revolution, and such was the strength of old habits and ideas, that even events like these were not sufficient to change the politics of the nation.

But there was trouble brewing between the Federal leaders. In spite of his cabinet, Mr. Adams had made peace with France, and thus frustrated the military aspirations of General Hamilton. Besides, Adams was a most unmanageable man. He did not like Hamilton, and Hamilton could not endure him, and was determined, by fair means or by foul, to get rid of him. By fair means, this could not have been done, for, in New England, the home and stronghold of Federalism, Adams was the strongest man. Hamilton's scheme was, that John Adams and C. C. Pinckney should be the Federal candidates for President and Vice-President, but Pinckney should, by secret maneuvers, be made to receive a vote or two more than Adams, and thus be elected to the first office. *The people were to be deliberately cheated.* They were to be deluded with the idea, that, while voting for certain legislators, they were voting John Adams into a second term of the Presidency; but their votes were really to have the effect of putting Adams back again into the Vice-Presidency, and of making General Pinckney President!

John Adams's own graphic version of the story is as follows: "Hamilton made a journey to Boston, Providence, etc., to persuade the people and their legislatures, but without suc-

cess, to throw away some of their votes, that Adams might not have the unanimous vote of New England; consequently, that Pinckney might be brought in as President, and Adams as Vice-President. Washington was dead, and the Cincinnati were assembled at New York to choose Hamilton for their new President. Whether he publicly opened his project to the whole assembly of the Cincinnati or not, I will not say; but of this I have such proof as I can not doubt, namely, that he broached it privately to such members as he could trust; for the learned and pious doctors, Dwight and Badcock, who, having been chaplains in the army, were then attending as two reverend knights of the order, with their blue ribbons and bright eagles at their sable button-holes, were heard to say repeatedly in the room where the society met, '*We must sacrifice Adams*,' '*We must sacrifice Adams*.' Of this fact I have such evidence that I should dare to appeal, if it were worth while, to the only survivor, Dr. Dwight, of New Haven University.

"About the same time, walking in the streets of Philadelphia, I met on the opposite sidewalk, Colonel Joseph Lyman, of Springfield, one of the most amiable men in Congress, and one of the most candid men in the world. As soon as he saw me he crossed over to my side of the street, and said, 'Sir, I cross over to tell you some news.' 'Ay! what news? I hope it is good!' 'Hamilton has divided the Federalists, and proposed to them to give you the go-by, and bring in Pinckney. By this step he has divided the Federalists, and given great offense to the honestest part of them. I am glad of it, for it will be the ruin of his faction.' My answer was, 'Colonel Lyman, it will be, as you say, the ruin of his faction; but it will also be the ruin of honester men than any of them.' And with these words I marched on, and left him to march the other way.'

"I was soon afterward informed, by personal witnesses and private letters, that Hamilton had assembled a meeting of the citizens and made an elaborate harangue to them. He spoke of the President, John Adams, with respect! But with what respect, I leave you, sir, to conjecture. Hamilton soon after

called another and more secret caucus to prepare a list of representatives for the city of New York, in their State legislature, who were to choose electors of President and Vice-President. He fixed upon a list of his own friends, people of little weight or consideration in the city or the country. Burr, who had friends in all circles, had a copy of this list brought to him immediately. He read it over, with great gravity folded it up, put it in his pocket, and without uttering another word, said, '*Now I have him hollow.*' "

And he really *had* him hollow. In a moment, the means of carrying the city, upon which all depended, flashed upon his mind, and he proceeded forthwith to execute the scheme.

His first step was to prepare a list of candidates to represent the city in the Assembly. But a difficulty arose at the very outset: Hamilton's whole heart was in this election, and it was certain that he would take an active personal part in the campaign; and that, particularly, during the three days of the election, his harangues to the people would be more effective than ever before. Burr, too, must be on the ground. It was also thought indispensable to the complete success of the plan, that he should be a member of the legislature. But if his name were on the city ticket, it would neutralize his exertions, as he would seem to be electioneering and haranguing for himself. Some votes would also be diverted from the Republican side by the recollection of Burr's agency in the Manhattan Bank affair. In this dilemma, it was suggested that he should be a candidate for the Assembly in Orange county, where he was better known and more popular than in any other county. This part of the plan was confided to influential Democrats of that county, and, it may as well be stated at once, was successful.

This matter disposed of, the city ticket was drawn up. With matchless audacity, Burr proposed to his confederates the following persons as candidates for the Assembly. At the head of his ticket, he placed the name of George Clinton, so long the Governor of the State, now retired from all public employments, and declining into the vale of years. Next came the name, not less distinguished, of the conqueror

of Burgoyne, General Horatio Gates. Then followed Samuel Osgood, Henry Rutgers, Elias Neusen, Thomas Storm, George Warner, Philip J. Arcularius, James Hunt, Ezekiel Robbins, Brockholst Livingston, and John Swartwout; all of them gentlemen who, for one reason or another, added peculiar strength to the ticket. Osgood, for example, had been a member of Congress, and Washington's Postmaster-General, and was a man of the highest estimation in the city. Livingston was a very eminent lawyer, afterward Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States. He was a son of that Governor of New Jersey whose noble eulogy of Burr's father I have elsewhere quoted. Swartwout, very popular for his manly bearing and amiable qualities, was Burr's most devoted friend. The name of Rutgers is still familiar in a New Yorker's ear, as it lives in that of the street where he resided. In a word, Burr's ticket, from the celebrity of some of its names, the eminent respectability of others, and the peculiar popularity of the rest, was the strongest ever offered for the popular suffrages in this State. Above all, it was an obvious and striking contrast to Hamilton's.

To draw up an imposing catalogue of names is not a difficult feat. To induce those gentlemen to stand was a matter beset with difficulties, such as, perhaps, no man in the world could have overcome but Aaron Burr. The consent of the nine less known persons was obtained without much trouble. But Clinton, Livingston, and Gates, each representing a faction of the great Republican party, each with personal aims, claims and jealousies, neither disposed to act with the others, were, for a long time, deaf to arguments and to entreaties, and immovable in their resolve not to allow their names to be used. Gates was one of Burr's peculiar adherents, and extremely averse to Hamilton and Schuyler, with whom he had been ill friends ever since the time of the cabal in the revolutionary war. Yet neither his friendship for Burr nor his enmity to Schuyler, nor his party spirit, nor all these together, were strong enough to overcome his repugnance to being a candidate. Livingston proved the most tractable. After repeated interviews, Burr wrung from him a reluctant consent

to run, *provided* Governor Clinton and General Gates were candidates also.

This was a great point gained. Burr now applied himself to Gates with redoubled energy. There are vague traditions that the art with which Burr worked upon the foibles and judgment of Gates was among the finest displays of his peculiar talent. When all other expedients failed, he resorted to importunate persuasions, and the general was induced at last to say that he would stand, if Governor Clinton would.

But Clinton was the hardest case of all. Clinton's friends called him a very firm man; his opponents thought him very obstinate. His portrait shows the strong, downright, immovable, north-Ireland character of the man. He had thick bushy eye-brows, a well developed lower face and double chin, a closed large mouth, a scrutinizing look out of the eyes, a good medium forehead, with his scanty gray hair combed up to hide its bald summit. It is the plain, shaggy-looking face of an honest, wary north-of-Irelander. Now Clinton himself had pretensions to the presidency. In 1793, when he received fifty electoral votes out of a hundred and thirty-two, and Jefferson had but four, it was Clinton, not Jefferson, that seemed to be on the high road to the presidential mansion. The reasons that induce a party to change its standard-bearer seldom convince the man who is displaced. In a word, George Clinton did not like Thomas Jefferson. He was now solicited to stand for the Assembly, for the sole purpose of helping Jefferson into the presidential chair; and he was asked to do this by the man who, though a stripling aid-de-camp when George Clinton was the foremost man of the State, and a person of national importance, had in 1797 received thirty electoral votes to Clinton's four! Governor Clinton was an able and patriotic man, but such personal considerations as these have an influence over all but the very best of the species.

Burr never had a harder task than to win over this strong, prejudiced, determined man to the purposes of the party. Clinton said that he did not think highly of Jefferson's statesmanship, and had not faith in his sincerity as a Republican, nor even in his integrity as a man. He thought him a *trimmer;*

and so thinking, he said he could not conscientiously support him for the highest office. "But," said the governor, on one occasion, "if you, Mr. Burr, were the candidate for the presidential chair, I would act with pleasure, and with vigor." To such objections as these, Burr replied in his mild, persuasive way, with not the smallest appearance of effect. Committees and sub-committees and individuals, by turns, besieged the governor's ear, for three days. There was a final interview at length, between the governor and the nominating committee, at Burr's own house. All the old arguments were used, and new ones offered. The committee expostulated, and the committee entreated, but the tough old soldier stood to his purpose with a pertinacity worthy of his race. Burr then said, that it was a right inherent in a community to *command* the services of an individual at a great crisis, and declared the intention of the party to nominate and elect Governor Clinton, without regard to his inclination. The governor at last made this slight concession, that he would not publicly repudiate the nomination. He afterward agreed that, during the canvass, he would refrain, in his ordinary conversation, from denouncing Jefferson in the style that had become habitual to him. The old man was true to his promise, but neither he nor his rising nephew, De Witt Clinton, nor his son, nor any of his connections, personally assisted in the campaign, as they had been wont to do in previous contests.

The curtain was now lifted. A public meeting under imposing auspices was held, at which the ticket was announced and ratified with enthusiasm. It gave life and hope to the despairing Republicans. It alarmed the Federalists, who, till now, had been confident of a victory.

In arranging the details of the campaign, Burr's skillful hand was employed with good effect. The finance committee had prepared a list of the wealthy Republicans, with the sum which they proposed to solicit attached to each name. On looking over the list, Colonel Burr observed that a certain rich man, equally remarkable for zeal and parsimony, was assessed one hundred dollars.

"Strike out his name," said Burr, "for you will not get the

money; and from the moment the demand is made upon him, his exertions will cease, and you will not see him at the polls during the election."

The name was erased. Lower down in the catalogue, he noticed the same sum placed opposite the name of another man who was liberal with his money, but incorrigibly lazy.

"Double it," said he, "and tell him no labor will be expected from him, except an occasional attendance in the committee-rooms to help fold the tickets. He will pay you the two hundred dollars, and thank you for letting him off so easily."

This was done. The result, in both cases, proved the truth of Burr's prediction. The lazy man paid the money without a demur, and the zealous man worked day and night.

Last of all, Colonel Burr devoted himself to operating directly on the public mind. He provided for a succession of ward and general meetings, most of which he himself attended and addressed. He kept the canvass all alive by his indefatigable activity. He declared everywhere that the party really had a majority in the city; and it was only necessary to awaken such an interest in the election as would draw out every Republican vote, and the victory was theirs. This was no random assertion. By means of lists of the voters, with the political history of each, appended in parallel columns, which were incessantly added to and corrected, as new information was obtained, he had reduced the important department of political prophecy almost to certainty. He would have made it quite certain, but for circumstances which, though they often decide elections, can not, in the nature of things, be foretold. The weather of election day is one of these. In Burr's lists, not only a man's opinions were noted, but his degree of zeal, his temperament, his health, his habits, all these things were taken into account, to ascertain what quantity of excitement or inducement was necessary to overcome the fatal propensity of the comfortable citizen to neglect voting. Thus, on one occasion, when Colonel Burr was running for office, and the first two days of the election had passed without either candidate getting a decided advantage, h said, "If it is a fine day to-morrow I shall get a small maj ity in the city; if not,

not." The day was fine, and the event justified his confident prediction. The leaders of the party in the city, knowing the accuracy and extent of his information, received his prophecies of success on the present occasion more as information than as prediction. They were buoyant with hope, that the party, after twelve years of defeat, was now on the eve of a national triumph.*

The polls opened on the morning of April 29th, and closed at sunset on the 2d of May. During these three days, the exertions of both parties were immense. Hamilton was in the field animating his followers with his powerful declamation. Burr addressed large assemblages of Republicans. Sometimes both champions appeared on the same platform, and addressed the multitude in turn, upon the questions in dispute. On these occasions, their bearing toward one another was so gracefully courteous, as to be remembered by many in the crowd they addressed, long after the matter of their speeches was forgotten.

The contest closed. Before the rival chiefs slept on the night of the 2d of May, the news was brought to them that the Republicans had carried the city by a majority of 490 votes.

Hamilton was not prepared for defeat, and the news struck him like a blow. Nothing but some desperate expedient

* Colonel Knapp, author of a short memoir of Burr, written in a friendly spirit, says a few words respecting the manner of Burr's intercourse with the party out of doors, which may be quoted here. I copy it the more willingly, because the great mass of what I quote from others respecting Burr was conceived in enmity or repugnance to him. "Colonel Burr," says Mr. Knapp, "never courted the mob by mingling with them, and sharing their movements; for it was seldom they met him. He made no converts by *pewter mug* stories, and they liked him the better for all this abstraction from the great body of democracy; but whenever he came in contact with the humblest of his admirers, it was well known that he treated them so blandly that his manners were remembered when the whole conversation was forgotten. His manners were the most courtly of any one of his age. He had not the parade of Morris, nor the gravity of Jay; but he never for a moment forgot himself by assumption or too much familiarity. The self-possession which he always sustained gave him great advantages over other men who are vassals to their passions, and at times can not hide their weaknesses."

could now save the Union from falling into the hands of the Philistines; and in the frenzy of his disappointment he resolved upon trying a desperate expedient.

The next day, while the city was in the first flush of excitement at the news, Hamilton called together a few of the most influential Federalists, and laid before them his scheme; which was, to induce Governor Jay to call an extra session of the old legislature (whose term of service had still eight weeks to run), for the purpose of changing the mode of choosing presidential electors. Two years before, Burr had attempted to carry a bill through the legislature, providing that the electors should be chosen directly by the people, voting by districts. His object, since he then despaired of getting a Republican majority in the legislature, was to secure *part* of the electoral college of the State for the democratic candidate at the next presidential election. The Federalists saw his object, and defeated it, though a juster measure was never proposed. Hamilton, a sudden convert to this policy, was now bent on accomplishing, by unworthy means, what Colonel Burr had honorably endeavored before him. The Federal caucus jumped at the mean expedient, and Hamilton, the next day, wrote an elaborate letter to the governor, unfolding the plan, and urging its instant execution.

The anti-Federal party, he wrote, was a composition of very incongruous materials, but *all of them tending to mischief;* some to the emasculation of the government, others to revolutionizing it in the style of Bonaparte. The government must not be confided to the custody of its enemies. True, the measure proposed was open to objection. But a popular government could not stand if one party called to its aid all the resources which vice could give, and the other, however pressing the emergency, felt itself obliged to confine itself within the ordinary forms of delicacy and decorum. These forms were valuable; but they ought not to hinder the taking of a step strictly legal and constitutional, to prevent *an atheist in religion and a fanatic in politics* from getting possession of the helm of State.

The letter was dispatched. Judge of the consternation of

its author and his caucus when they read, in a Republican newspaper *of the following day*, a full exposure of the scheme, including an account of the caucus, its proceedings, and the measure it had concluded to recommend. The public read this article with incredulity. Even the Federal editors, who were not in the secret, denounced it as the basest of slanders. "Where is the American," exclaimed one of them, "who will not detest the author of this infamous lie? If there is a man to be found who will sanction this publication, he is worse than the worst of Jacobins!" No doubt, many a Federalist went to his grave in the belief that the story was a weak invention of the enemy. Among the papers of Governor Jay, Hamilton's letter was found, with this honest indorsement, in the governor's hand: "*Proposing a measure for party purposes, which I think it would not become me to adopt.*" For *party* purposes, says the candid governor, summarily disposing of Hamilton's self-deceiving array of fine motives.

That Hamilton should have deliberately made such a proposal, shows more than the limitedness of his understanding, and his ignorance of the state of things in which he lived. It shows that, with all his gentlemanliness of demeanor and feeling, he was not a *thorough-bred* gentleman; a character, the distinguishing and essential quality of which is, a love of FAIR PLAY. He had, of his own free will, gone down into the arena, and accepted battle on the known and usual conditions. He was beaten fairly. Then he attempted, by a secret and unworthy maneuver, to steal the laurel from the victor's brow while he slept.

But the victor was not asleep. Before the election, Burr had obtained an intimation from some quarter that if the Republicans should carry the city, means would be found to deprive them of the fruits of their triumph. Upon this hint he acted. From the moment the polls closed every movement was watched. The counting of the votes was closely scrutinized. The goings and comings of the leading Federalists were observed, and thus the meeting of the caucus was ascertained, and its schemes exposed and baffled. The particular means by which the proceedings of the caucus were discovered, I

have not been able to ascertain. The whisper at the time was that Hamilton and Burr were both enamored of the same frail woman, who really loved Burr, but endured Hamilton only that she might beguile him of secrets with which to ingratiate herself with his rival. I utterly disbelieve this wretched gossip. Nearly every such tale of noted men proves, when examined, to be a fable. Neither Hamilton nor Burr was blameless toward women; but neither of them, I am sure, ever addicted himself to the kind of debauchery which is implied in the story referred to.

The news of the result of the New York election took the country by surprise. To Jefferson all eyes were now turned as the man destined soon to wield the power and patronage of the government. The Federalists had been so long accustomed to conquer, and the Republicans to be only a vehement, despised, and hopeless opposition, that the probability of the two parties changing positions, produced an effect which may be imagined. Mr. Jefferson, in one of his letters to Dr. Rush, records the effect of the startling intelligence upon the mind of President Adams.

"On the day," wrote Jefferson, "on which we learned in Philadelphia the vote of the city of New York, which it was well known would decide the vote of the State, and that again the vote of the Union, I called on Mr. Adams on some official business. He was very sensibly affected, and accosted me with these words: 'Well, I understand that you are to beat me in this contest, and I will only say that I will be as faithful a subject as any you will have.'

"'Mr. Adams,' said I, 'this is no personal contest between you and me. Two systems of principles, on the subject of government, divide our fellow-citizens into two parties. With one of these you concur, and I with the other. As we have been longer on the public stage than most of those now living, our names happen to be more generally known. One of these parties, therefore, has put your name at its head, the other mine. Were we both to die to-day, to-morrow two other names would be in the place of ours, without any change in

the motion of the machinery. Its motion is from its principle, not from you or myself.'

"'I believe you are right,' said he, 'that we are but passive instruments, and should not suffer this matter to affect our personal dispositions.'"

Hamilton did not yet despair. One of his first letters, written after the loss of New York, concedes the probability of a Republican success, but he adds that his scheme of secretly supporting Pinckney for the presidency, instead of Adams, "is the only thing that can save us from the fangs of Jefferson." A few days after, he writes to the same friend, that "under Adams, as under Jefferson, the government will sink." A week or two later, to another gentleman, he quotes Franklin's character of Adams ("always honest, sometimes great, but often mad"), and adds that Adams is honest indeed, but only "as far as a man excessively vain and jealous, and *ignobly* attached to *place*, can be." Thenceforth Hamilton's efforts were directed to the single object of concentrating upon Pinckney the entire strength of the Federal party, north and south. For this he schemed, and wrote, and talked, and toiled, and traveled during the summer and autumn of 1800. But he had a nimble, a dexterous, a sleepless adversary.

Toward the close of the summer, Hamilton prepared a pamphlet, in which he stated his reasons for objecting to the reëlection of the President, descanting freely upon his public conduct, and his personal infirmities. This pamphlet was entitled: "A Letter from Alexander Hamilton, concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, Esquire, President of the United States." It was designed, first, to serve as a circular letter to very confidential friends in New England, and, secondly, to be disseminated extensively in the South, particularly in South Carolina, at so late a period of the canvass that the double-play could not be known at the North till the election was over. The pamphlet was sent to the printer, under the most stringent stipulations that the work should be executed secretly, and every copy delivered into Hamilton's own hands. The story goes, that Colonel Burr, who was ever an early riser, was walking in the streets

near Hamilton's house, very early one morning, when he met a boy carrying a covered basket.

"What have you there, my lad?" asked Burr, who was prone to accost young people that he met in the streets.

"Pamphlets for General Hamilton," replied the boy, not knowing their importance.

Burr asked for one, and the boy complied without hesitation. Burr took the pamphlet, and, at one glance, saw what a prize chance had thrown in his way. This is the current *story;* but it is improbable. Mr. Davis merely says, that Colonel Burr, having ascertained that such a pamphlet was in press, made "arrangements" for procuring a copy as soon as the printing should be completed. How he obtained the pamphlet is, therefore, uncertain, but the essential fact remains, that he obtained it.

In the evening of the same day, he summoned to his house three of his confederates, John Swartwout, Robert Swartwout, and M. L. Davis, to whom he read the pamphlet, and unfolded the plan he had formed of hurling it, a hissing bomb-shell, into the camp of the enemy. He simply proposed to give the leading contents of the pamphlet sudden and universal publicity. Extracts were accordingly made on the spot, and Davis was charged with the duty of procuring their simultaneous insertion in one of the principal Republican journals of New England, and in the *Aurora* of Philadelphia. The extracts appeared. They produced all the effect the bitterest enemy of the Federal party could have desired. Astonishment and incredulity, by turns, beset the Federal intellect, but the publication of new passages, from time to time, together with the popular recognition of Hamilton's style, soon banished all doubt that the great leader had been playing a double game. He thought it best, at length, to publish the pamphlet entire, and a few days before the presidential electors were to be chosen it appeared.

This exposure destroyed the last hope of the Federalists. "It rent the party in twain," as a writer truly observes. A month after the pamphlet appeared, William Duane, editor of the *Aurora*, that terror of the respectable Federalists, sent

a copy of it to General Collot, of Paris. Chance preserved that copy, and, within these few years, brought it back to the United States, with the note that originally accompanied it, which reads thus:

"CITIZEN-GENERAL.—This pamphlet has done more mischief to the parties concerned, than all the labors of the *Aurora*. WILLIAM DUANE."

Adams said of it, that "if the single purpose had been to defeat the President, no more propitious moment could have been chosen." And again: "One thing I know, that Cicero was not sacrificed to the vengeance of Antony by the unfeeling selfishness of the latter triumvirate, more egregiously than John Adams was to the unbridled ambition of Alexander Hamilton in the American triumvirate!"

John Adams was, indeed, so thoroughly disgusted with Hamilton's treason to the head of his party, that, down to a late period of his life, he could seldom write his name without adding to it an epithet of repugnance. Burr he always mentions with respect.

Hamilton's conduct in this business was utterly unjustifiable. Not a thousand voters in the country had so much as thought of Pinckney for President. In the newspapers, and the public meetings, Adams, and only Adams, was named as the Federal candidate for the first office. Hamilton's intrigue was therefore a design to frustrate the people's will by putting into the presidential chair a man who had not even been named for the office before the people. Two palliating circumstances, however, may be mentioned. One is that Hamilton, being a Tory by nature, had really no conception of what Democrats mean by the *rights of the people*. Another is, that, at that day, presidential electors were not quite the mere formality they have since become; but were supposed to have, in some degree, a right of choice. It may also be said of Alexander Hamilton, that if he intrigued dishonorably, he did so from an honorable motive. Of his rival, we may say, that he intrigued, for the most part, honorably and for good purposes, but without being animated by public spirit. No one, I think, can long read the writings of Hamilton without feeling himself to

be in contact with a nature essentially good; but narrow and inflexible for that expanding age; that era of hope, idea, and invention; that glorious dawn of a better Day than the world has ever known. He saw that democracy is a resolving of society back again into its original elements! Democracy is chaos he would say. True, Democracy contending with Privilege is chaos. But after chaos comes CREATION!

A President and Vice-President were now to be chosen by the electors. Among the Republicans there was but one name mentioned for the first office, and that was Thomas Jefferson. But for the second there were competitors. In those days, what we now accomplish by nominating conventions, was done by party caucuses of the members of Congress. A few days after the news of the great New York election reached Philadelphia, a Republican caucus was held for the purpose of deciding upon a candidate for the vice-presidency. A nomination was equivalent to an election, and the caucus therefore proceeded cautiously. At the first meeting it was only settled that the candidate should be selected from New York, as it was New York that had just made the final victory more than probable. A gentleman was appointed to converse with the leading politicians of that State and report to the caucus their preferences. The choice, it was found, lay between three men, Chancellor Livingston, George Clinton, and Aaron Burr. It was at once concluded that Chancellor Livingston's deafness was an insuperable objection to an officer who would have to preside over a deliberative body, and he was set aside. Clinton and Burr were the two remaining. Of the negotiation which resulted in the selection of Burr various accounts have been given. The probable version is that George Clinton desired the nomination, and that his family and friends demanded it for him; but that the Burrites, urging the palpable fact, that to Burr, and Burr alone, the democratic victory was due, claimed it strenuously for their chief. In '96, they might have urged, he had received thirty electoral votes; and as the party used his name when success was scarcely hoped for by the most sanguine, it was but fair that it should be taken up when success was nearly certain. Burr was nomi-

nated. Clinton was soon after elected once more to the governorship of the State.

Hamilton was dreadfully embittered against Burr by the events of this summer. The rage of his "faction," says John Adams, "appeared to me then, and has ever since appeared, an absolute delirium." In August, we find Hamilton writing to his friend Bayard, of Delaware, in the following strain upon the prospects of the campaign:

"There seems to be," said he, "too much probability that Jefferson or Burr will be President. The latter is intriguing with all his might in New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont; and there is a possibility of some success in his intrigues. He counts positively on the universal support of the anti-Federalists; and that by some adventitious aid from other quarters, he will overtop his friend Jefferson. Admitting the first point, the conclusion may be realized, and, if it is so, Burr will certainly attempt to reform the government *à la Buonaparte*. He is as unprincipled and dangerous a man as any country can boast—as true a Catiline as ever met in midnight conclave."

Hamilton's assertions respecting the movements and character of his opponents, are absolutely worthless as evidence. They show nothing but the liveliness of his imagination, the intensity of his feelings, and the smallness of his information. The passage quoted is about as credible as a story published in the Boston *Independent Chronicle*, in the summer of 1800, to the effect, that General Hamilton had been heard to say that "if Mr. Pinckney was not elected President, a revolution would be the consequence, and that, within the next four years, he should lose his head, or be the leader of a triumphant army." I do not say that what Hamilton says of Burr was certainly not true, but that it is not to be believed because Hamilton says it.

Other leading Federalists had no such horror of our dexterous hero. Some, despairing of their own candidates, even entertained the thought of giving him votes enough to elect him President over Jefferson. Senator Cabot, of Massachusetts, wrote to Hamilton upon this project, in the month of August:

"The question has been asked," said Cabot, "whether, if the Federalists can not carry their first points, they would not do well to turn the election from Jefferson to Burr. They conceive Burr to be less likely to look to France for support, than Jefferson, provided he could be supported at home. They consider Burr as actuated by ordinary ambition, Jefferson by that and the pride of the Jacobinical philosophy. The former may be satisfied by power and property, the latter must see the roots of our society pulled up, and a new course of cultivation substituted; certainly it would have been fortunate for the United States if the second candidate on the Jacobin side had been one who might be safely trusted."

The venerable Carroll, of Carrollton, would have preferred Burr, as he supposed Burr would "act with more decision than Jefferson, and go better with his party." With either, however, the old gentleman thought the country on the road to ruin; Jacobinical chaos or Bonapartean usurpation was sure to overtake the doomed republic, sooner or later. Among the ultra Federalists this opinion was universal.

About the middle of December, the leaders of both parties knew how the election had gone. The result struck both sides with disappointment: Jefferson, 73; Burr, 73; Adams, 65; Pinckney, 64; Jay, 1.

Such was the doubtful issue of so many years of labor, of so much honorable effort, and so much not-very-honorable maneuvering. The tie, of course, threw the election into the House of Representatives. The politicians, instead of resting from their toils, were suddenly stimulated to such an activity of intrigue as never was known before. The country was wild with excitement. Aaron Burr soared at once into a position of national importance such as he had never before held.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TIE INTRIGUES.

The Works of Washington, Jefferson, Adams and Hamilton — Letter from Burr to Wilkinson — Letter from Jefferson to Burr — Letter from Burr to Hon. S. Smith appointing him his Proxy — Letter from Hamilton to Secretary Wolcott denouncing Burr — The Federalists bent on electing Burr President — Letter from Otis to Hamilton asking Advice respecting the Project — Second Letter from Hamilton to Wolcott against Burr — Letter from Jefferson to Madison denouncing the Federal Intrigues — Honest Letter from Gouverneur Morris — Letter from Hamilton to Sedgwick, denouncing Burr — Letters from Hamilton to Morris and Bayard against Burr — Replies of Morris and Bayard to Hamilton — Letter from General Green to Hamilton — Letter of Governor Rutledge to Hamilton — Sedgwick's Reply to Hamilton — Long Letter of Hamilton to Bayard — Hamilton to Morris again — The Election in the House — Scene between Jefferson and Adams — Proof of Burr's Political Integrity — The Inauguration.

What occurred among the politicians from the middle of December, when the tie was first known, to the middle of February, when the House voted upon it, shall be, as far as possible, shown, not told. The publications of the last few years enable us to read the history of that time in the very words of its leading personages.

Among the volumes which "no gentleman's library is complete without," and which, in most gentlemen's libraries, slumber on the shelves with uncut leaves, are the forty ponderous octavoes, containing the works of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, and Alexander Hamilton. That these volumes should be so utterly neglected as they are is not creditable to the national intelligence. In the Mercantile Library of the city of New York, which counts its subscribers by thousands, the condition in which these books were found by me, two or three years ago, was as follows: the first volume of each set showed marks of having been taken out and looked through, two or three times. The second volume had evidently been handled by some *one* adventurous person, and

about half of its leaves were cut. Beyond the second volume, no traces of the hand of man were discovered; a boundless continuity of virgin pages gave the reader a pleasing consciousness that he was the explorer of untrodden regions. Yet it is by the perusal of these works, aided by the memoirs of the time, that alone a knowledge of the country's history, during the period in which alone it had a history, can be obtained. Along with much that the modern reader may skip, with many essays upon government that once were vital and glowing, but can not now be read by any mortal, these works contain a mass of reading, instructive, interesting, and suggestive.

The letters and diaries are the best part of them. These are full of life and nature. Some of them are eloquent and impressive, the offspring of vigorous minds, wrought up to their highest strain by having to grapple with distractingly difficult circumstances. The letters correct one another. None of the writers, except Washington could make due allowance for one another's errors and foibles, and they often speak of political adversaries in terms of bitter depreciation. Hamilton is especially vituperative. He had the fine, declamatory talent which is often possessed by men of ardent feelings and limited understandings; and he used that talent in denouncing his opponents.

In this chapter, I propose to extract such passages of the letters written by leading politicians during the sixty days of the Tie excitement, which throw light upon the character and history of Aaron Burr, or upon the complicated events in which he now played a passive but conspicuous part, or upon the state of things in the country at this great crisis of the contention between the Old and the New. By thus bringing to a focus many scattered rays, the TRUTH, so long obscured, will, I trust, become visible to all but unwilling eyes. The extracts shall be arranged in the order of their dates. It may be as well to mention that, during the greater part of these sixty days, Hamilton was in New York, Jefferson at Washington, and Burr at Albany. Colonel Burr, it may be remembered, was a member of the State legislature. So far

from being "shrouded in mystery" at Albany, as two historians have it, he was there for the simple purpose of performing his duty in the Assembly, of which body he was always a busy member.

Another fact should he borne in mind. Up to this time, and for years after, Hamilton and Burr were, to all appearance, excellent friends. They consulted together on points of law. They met at the houses of common friends. Hamilton dined at Burr's table occasionally, and Burr at Hamilton's. The lovely Theodosia visited Mrs. Hamilton and her daughters. Many gentlemen who knew both Hamilton and Burr, and knew them, as they supposed, intimately, had no knowledge of Hamilton's embittered feelings against Burr. Burr himself had not. With all his acuteness and dexterity he was remarkably confiding; and though he was aware of Hamilton's intense partisan feelings, he did not, at this time, know the manner in which his rival was accustomed to write and speak of him. Far indeed was he from supposing Hamilton capable of using against him the careless words that fell from his lips at his own hospitable table! But to proceed.

October 10*th*, 1800. First I will copy entire a letter* written by Burr to General Wilkinson, after the democratic victory was known, but before the tie had been announced. It may serve as a specimen of his cautious manner of writing to confidential friends. It was written at Ballston, in the State of New York:

"That through Biddle, and the other of the 29th, came safe to me at Albany yesterday, P.M., just as I was mounting my horse to ride hither for my daughter, who has been passing a few days with a friend in this neighborhood, while I was attending on public duties at Albany. Having made electors, and a Senator, all democratic, the legislature adjourned, to meet on the last Tuesday in January, when I shall be again in Albany. To-morrow I move toward New York; and shall remain there for at least two months. From all this you will

* This letter is from the Appendix to the second volume of Wilkinson's "Memoirs."

know how to address me; and as to the mode of conveyance, I take the mail to be the most secure. Our post-offices in New York and in Albany are *perfectly* safe. If yours in Washington, or where else you may be, should be safe, you may write fully. My curiosity as to S., is indeed gratified, even to satiety. I wish her well, and something more. I regret the book for the injury it will do (has done) to the reputation of one honest man, and the feelings of another. John's pride will be much wounded. In Jersey, I suspect, Adams will not have a vote. Among the electors I see some of his known political enemies, not Democrats, but high-going Feds. Virginia is pledged as far forth as faith and honor can bind men. You must be deceived as to S. C. When I receive your cypher and your address, you shall hear from me. Till then,

"Adieu. A. Burr."

"Noah Webster, the printer, has, I am told, published a letter against A. H. I have not seen it."

December 15*th*, 1800. — Jefferson, who had been for four or five years, a correspondent of Burr's, writes him to-day a congratulatory letter upon the happy result of the election. The exact result was not yet known; but there was no doubt the Republicans had triumphed. The tie was dimly foreshadowed. After some preliminary observations of no importance now, Mr. Jefferson proceeds thus:

"It was badly managed not to have arranged with certainty what seems to have been left to hazard. It was the more material, because I understand several high-flying Federalists have expressed their hope that the two Republican tickets may be equal, and their determination in that case to prevent a choice in the House of Representatives (which they are strong enough to do), and let the government devolve on a President of the Senate. Decency required that I should be so entirely passive during the late contest, that I never once asked whether arrangements had been made to prevent so many from dropping votes intentionally as might frustrate half the Republican wish; nor did I doubt, till lately, that such had been made.

"While I must congratulate you, my dear sir, on the issue of this contest, because it is more honorable, and, doubtless, more grateful to you than any station within the competence of the chief magistrate; yet, for myself, and for the substantial service of the public, I feel most sensibly the loss we sustain of your aid in our new administration. It leaves a chasm in my arrangements which can not be adequately filled up. I had endeavored to compose an administration whose talents, integrity, names, and dispositions should at once inspire unbounded confidence in the public mind, and insure a perfect harmony in the conduct of the public business. I lose you from the list, and am not sure of all the others. Should the gentlemen who possess the public confidence decline taking a part in their affairs, and force us to take persons unknown to the people, the evil genius of this country may realize his avowal that 'he will beat down the administration.' The return of Mr. Van Benthuysen, one of your electors, furnishes me a confidential opportunity of writing this much to you, which I should not have ventured through the post-office at this prying season. We shall, of course, see you before the 4th of March."

The "evil genius of this country," according to Mr. Jefferson, was Alexander Hamilton, and, doubtless, he was the individual referred to in this epistle. At a later and calmer day, Jefferson was juster to Hamilton.

December 16th. — One day after the above was written, and three or four days before it could have reached its destination, Colonel Burr wrote a letter to Mr. S. Smith, a member of the House of Representatives from Maryland, the material part of which was the following:

"It is highly probable that I shall have an equal number of votes with Mr. Jefferson; but, if such should be the result, every man who knows me ought to know that I would utterly disclaim all competition. Be assured that the Federal party can entertain no wish for such an exchange. As to my friends, they would dishonor my views and insult my feelings by a suspicion that I would submit to be instrumental in counteracting

the wishes and the expectations of the United States. And I now constitute you my proxy to declare these sentiments if the occasion should require."

As this letter came, afterward, to be thought insincere, it is proper to mention that, *at the time*, it was highly applauded by the Republicans. At public dinners and other meetings, it was quoted as a proof of Burr's respect for the will of the people. He also received addresses and letters, applauding it.

December 16th. — Hamilton, too, writes a letter to-day. Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury under Washington and Adams, and a 'high-flying Federalist,' was the individual addressed. This letter contains a passage relative to Burr and the tie, that breathes the very spirit of meanness. After stating, among other things, that Burr was "bankrupt beyond redemption, except by the plunder of his country," which was at least an exaggeration, he opposes the Federal project of supporting Burr, and adds the following despicable words:

"*Yet it may be well enough to throw out a lure for him, in order to tempt him to start for the plate, and then lay the foundation of disunion between the two chiefs.*"

December 17th. — But, among the Federalists, there had sprung up a perfect *furore* for electing Burr over Jefferson — so abhorrent to them was the prospect of seeing the arch-Democrat in the presidential chair. To-day, Mr. Otis, of Massachusetts, writes to Hamilton, the "father-confessor" of the Federal party, to ask his opinion how the Federalists could best improve the accident of the tie. "It is palpable," wrote Mr. Otis, "that to elect Burr would be to cover the opposition with chagrin, and to sow among them the seeds of a morbid division." Shall we, he continues, open negotiations with Burr? If yes, how? Will he stand to his engagements? We in Massachusetts do not know the man. You do. Advise us.

December 17th. — On the same day, Hamilton writes a second letter to Wolcott, rebuking vehemently the proposal to

elect Burr President by Federal votes. If the Federal party, he says, succeeds in electing Burr, "it will have done nothing more nor less than place in that station a man who will possess the boldness and daring necessary to give success to the Jacobin system, instead of one who, for want of that quality, will be less fitted to promote it.

"Let it not be imagined that Mr. Burr can be won to the Federal views. It is a vain hope. Stronger ties and stronger inducements than they can offer, will impel him in a different direction. His ambition will not be content with those objects which virtuous men of either party will allot to it, and his situation and his habits will oblige him to have recourse to corrupt expedients, from which he will be restrained by no moral scruple. To accomplish his end, he must lean upon unprincipled men, and will continue to adhere to the myrmidons who have hitherto surrounded him. To those he will, no doubt, add able rogues of the Federal party, but he will employ the rogues of all parties to overrule the good men of all parties, and to prosecute projects which wise men of every description will disapprove.

"These things are to be inferred, with moral certainty, from the character of the man. Every step in his career proves that he has formed himself upon the model of *Catiline*, and that he is too cold-blooded, and too determined a conspirator ever to change his plan.

"What would you think of these toasts and this conversation at his table within the last three or four weeks? 1st. The French Republic; 2d. The Commissioners on both sides who instigated the Convention (between France and the United States); 3d. Bonaparte; 4th. La Fayette.

"What would you think of his having seconded the positions that it was the interest of this country to allow the belligerent powers to bring in and sell their prizes, and build and equip ships in our ports? Can it be doubted that a man who has, all his life, speculated upon the popular prejudices, will consult them in the object of a war, when he thinks it is expedient to make one? Can a man who, despising democracy, has chimed in with all its absurdities, be diverted from the

plan of ambition which must have directed his course? They who suppose it must understand little of human nature. * * * Alas! when will men consult their reason rather than their passions? Whatever they may imagine, the desire of mortifying the adverse party must be the chief spring of the disposition to prefer Mr. Burr. * * * Adieu to the Federal Troy if they once introduce this Grecian horse into their citadel!"

Hamilton's horror of Burr's innocent and characteristic toasts (which, in another letter, he says he himself heard Burr give at Burr's own table), strikes the modern reader with surprise. The toasts were simply those of the ultra Democrats. They were strictly party toasts. Bonaparte had, indeed, usurped the government, but the French Republic still lived in name, and the American Republicans could toast the First Consul as "the armed soldier of democracy," and the great enemy of *their* great enemy, England. Burr, as a military man, could not but admire the greatest of soldiers. That Hamilton should have held up as monstrous such toasts as these, shows something of the humor and the caliber of the man, and of his party. It shows that, at that day, the ultra Federalists looked upon democratic opinions, as common-place clergymen regard heretical opinions, not merely as an erroneous way of thinking, but as a flagrant moral offense. A significance was then attached to toasts of which, in these unconvivial times, we can form little idea. Toasts were among the missive weapons of party warfare. By toasts, the sentiments of party were expressed, and the measures of party foreshadowed.

December 19*th.*—Jefferson writes to his friend Madison, announcing and deploring the tie; which, he says, "has produced great dismay and gloom on the Republican gentlemen here (Washington), and exultation in the Federalists, who openly declare they will prevent an election, and will name a President of the Senate *pro tem.* by what, they say, would only be a *stretch* of the Constitution."

December 19th.—To-day was written the only honest, and, therefore, the only sensible letter, which was written by a Federalist during the Tie controversy. The writer was Gouveneur Morris, a name ever to be held in respect from his having penned this epistle. The letter appears to have been written at Washington or Philadelphia. After mentioning the tie, and saying that there was a likelihood of the Federalists taking up Burr, but that some proposed preventing an election altogether, and putting the government upon a President of the Senate, Mr. Morris proceeded thus:

"Not meaning to enter into intrigues, I have merely expressed the opinion, that, SINCE IT WAS EVIDENTLY THE INTENTION OF OUR FELLOW-CITIZENS TO MAKE MR. JEFFERSON THEIR PRESIDENT, IT SEEMS PROPER TO FULFIL THAT INTENTION.

"The answer is simple, and, on mere reasoning, conclusive, but it is conclusive only to unimpassioned sentiment. Let the representatives do what they may, they will not want arguments to justify them, and the situation of our country (doomed perhaps to sustain, unsupported, a war against France or England) seems, indeed, to call for a vigorous, practical man. Mr. Burr will, it is said, come hither, and some who pretend to know his views think he will bargain with the Federalists. Of such a bargain I shall know nothing, and have declared my determination to support the constitutionally appointed administration, so long as its acts shall not, in my judgment, be essentially wrong. My personal line of conduct gives me no difficulty, but I am not without serious apprehension for the future state of things.

"The anti-Federal party is, beyond question, the most numerous at present, and should they be disappointed in their expectations as to the President, they will generally, I believe, oppose the government with embittered rancor. The best Federalists will, I apprehend, support but feebly a man whom (unjustly, perhaps) they consider as void of principle; and a government whose force lies in public opinion, will, under such circumstances, be critically situated."

In all Hamilton's correspondence on this subject, not one allusion can be found to the *only* right reason for preferring

Jefferson, which is so well stated by Gouveneur Morris in the above letter.

December 22d.—Hamilton writes to Theodore Sedgwick of Connecticut, formerly a friend and correspondent of Burr's. To Sedgwick he says, that "the appointment of Burr as President will disgrace our country abroad. No agreement with him could be relied upon." And more to the same effect.

December 24th.—Hamilton replies to Morris, briefly repeating his denunciations of Burr.

December 26th.—A similar letter from Hamilton to Morris, in which he "trusts the Federalists will not be so mad as to vote for Burr." "If," he adds, "there be a man in the world I ought to hate, it is Jefferson. *With Burr I have always been personally well.* But the public good must be paramount to every private consideration."

December 27th.—To-day, Hamilton writes a long and very earnest letter to Mr. Bayard of Delaware, a member of the House, who carried the vote of his State in his pocket. He denounces his friend Burr, as "a voluptuary by system," and adds the following:

"No engagement that can be made with him can be depended upon; while making it, he will laugh in his sleeve at the credulity of those with whom he makes it; and the first moment it suits his views to break it, he will do so. Let me add, that I could scarcely name a discreet man of either party in our State who does not think Mr. Burr the most unfit man in the United States for the office of President. Disgrace abroad, ruin at home, are the probable fruits of his elevation. To contribute to the disappointment and mortification of Mr. Jefferson, would be, on my part, only to retaliate for unequivocal proofs of enmity; but in a case like this, it would be base to listen to personal considerations."

In this letter Hamilton repeats the toasts, before quoted, which he had heard from Burr's lips, when, as he now says,

"I dined with him lately." He adds: "The peculiarity of the occasion will excuse my mentioning, in confidence, the occurrences of a private table."

January 5th, 1801. — Gouverneur Morris replies to Hamilton. In the course of his letter, he says: "Some, indeed most, of our eastern friends, are warm in support of Burr, and their pride is so much up about the charge of influence that it is dangerous to quote an opinion." He adds that the excitement among the politicians is fearful, and his own position of calm spectator difficult to support. "You who are temperate in drinking," he observes, "have never, perhaps, noticed the awkward situation of a man who continues sober after the company are drunk."

January 7th. — We are now getting into the interior circles. To-day Bayard, who held the power to decide the question by his single vote, replies to Hamilton at length, and with great apparent candor. He acknowledges Hamilton's letter, and thanks him for it; mentions Burr's letter to Mr. Smith, of Maryland, declining to frustrate the people's intention; and then proceeds thus:

"It (Burr's letter to Smith) is here (Washington) understood to have proceeded either from a false calculation as to the result of the electoral votes, or was intended as a cover to blind his own party. By persons friendly to Mr. Burr, it is distinctly stated that he is willing to consider the Federalists as his friends, and to accept the office of President as their gift. I take it for granted that Mr. Burr would not only gladly accept the office, but will neglect no means in his power to secure it." He then calculates his chances, and adds:

"I assure you, sir, there appears to be a strong inclination in a majority of the Federal party to support Mr. Burr. The current has already acquired considerable force, and manifestly increasing. The vote which the representation of a State enables me to give would decide the question in favor of Mr. Jefferson. At present I am by no means decided as to the

object of preference. If the Federal party should take up Mr. Burr, I ought certainly to be impressed with the most undoubting conviction before I separated myself from them. With respect to the personal quality of the competitors, I should fear as much from the sincerity of Mr. Jefferson (if he is sincere), as from the want of probity in Mr. Burr. There would be really cause to fear that the government would not survive the course of moral and political experiments to which it would be subjected in the hands of Mr. Jefferson. But there is another view of the subject which gives me inclination in favor of Burr. I consider the State ambition of Virginia as the source of present party. The faction who govern that State aim to govern the United States. Virginia will never be satisfied but when this state of things exists. If Burr should be the President, they will not govern, and his acceptance of the office, which would disappoint their views, which depend upon Jefferson, would, I apprehend, immediately create a schism in the party, which would soon rise into open opposition.

"I can not deny, however, that there are strong considerations which give a preference to Mr. Jefferson. The subject admits of many doubtful views, and before I resolve on the part I shall take, I shall wait the approach of the crisis, which may probably bring with it circumstances decisive of the event. The Federal party meets on Friday, for the purpose of forming a resolution as to their line of conduct. I have not the least doubt as to their agreeing to support Burr. Their determination will not bind me, for though it might cost me a painful struggle to disappoint the views and wishes of many gentlemen with whom I have been accustomed to act, yet the magnitude of the subject forbids the sacrifice of a strong conviction.

"I can not answer for the coherence of my letter, as I have undertaken to write to you from the Chamber of Representatives, with an attention divided by the debate which occupies the House.

"I have not considered myself at liberty to show your letter to any one, though I think it would be serviceable if you could trust my discretion in the communication of it."

January 9th. — General Gunn, a leading Federalist of Georgia, acknowledges to-day a letter from Hamilton on the engrossing topic, and adds some interesting statements. He writes from Washington:

"On the subject of choosing a President, some revolutionary opinions are gaining ground, and the Jacobins are determined to resist the election of Burr at every hazard — most of the Jacobin members will be instructed not to vote for Colonel Burr. I have seen a letter from Mr. Madison to one of the Virginia representatives, in which he says, that, in the event of the present House of Representatives not choosing Mr. Jefferson President, that the next House of Representatives will have a right to choose one of the two having the highest number of votes, and that the nature of the case, aided with the support of the great body of the people, will justify Jefferson and Burr *jointly* to call together the members of the next House of Representatives, previous to the 3d of December next, for the express purpose of choosing a President, and that he is confident *they* will make a *proper* choice." In other parts of his letter, he speaks of America being degraded by the *attempt* to elect Burr President. "What say you, my friend? the little Virginian must have been a little ferocious at the time he wrote to his friend. I am confident the present House will not elect Colonel Burr, and am persuaded the Democrats have taken their ground with a fixed resolution to destroy the government rather than yield their point. I fear some of our friends have committed themselves by writing improperly to Burr. We know the man, and those who put themselves in his power will repent their folly."

January 10th. — Governor John Rutledge of South Carolina, replies to a letter from Hamilton, in a way to enhance posterity's contempt for the Federal party of 1800.

"My determination," he says, "to support Mr. Burr has been shaken by your communication, and I shall make, among those who with you are anxious to preserve public order at this crisis, all the use of it that its seasonableness and value

will enable me to do. Viewing Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Burr separately, each appears improper for the presidency; but looking on them together, and comparatively, the Federalists think their preferring Burr will be the least mischief they can do. His promotion will be prodigiously afflicting to the Virginia faction, and must disjoint the party. If Mr. B.'s presidency be productive of evils, it will be very easy for us to excite jealousy respecting his motives, and to get rid of him. Opposed by the Virginia party, it will be *his interest* to conciliate the Federalists; and we are assured by a gentleman who lately had some conversation with Mr. B. on this subject, that he is disposed to maintain and expand our systems. Should he attempt a usurpation, he will endeavor to accomplish his ends in a bold manner, and by the union of daring spirits — his project in such a shape can not be very formidable, and those employed in the execution of it can very easily be made way with. Should Mr. Jefferson be disposed to make (as he would term it) an improvement (and as we should deem it, a subversion) of our Constitution, the attempt would be fatal to us, for he would begin by democratizing the people, and end by throwing every thing into their hands."

January 10th. — Theodore Sedgwick replies to Hamilton's letter of December 22. The wrong-headedness of the Federal leaders is conspicuously shown in this epistle. Mr. Sedgwick begins by saying that all the Democrats are for Jefferson, and most of the Federalists for Burr. He then admits, that the people's intention was, that Jefferson should be President. But why did the people prefer Jefferson?

"Because," says Mr. Sedgwick, "he was known to be hostile to all those great systems of administration, the combined effect of which is our national prosperity, and all we possess of national character and respectability; because he is a sincere and enthusiastic Democrat in principle, plausible in manner, crafty in conduct, persevering in the pursuit of his object, regardless of the means by which it is attained, and equally regardless of an adherence to truth, as demonstrated by his

letter to Mazzei,* his declaration in the Senate, on his first taking his seat there, etc., etc.; because he is known to be devoted to the views of those men in his State, whose unceasing effort it has been, and is, to reduce in *practice* the administration of their government to the *principles* of the old confederation, in which that State, by her numerous representatives, and the influence which she has on surrounding States, will be the dictator; because he is known to be servilely devoted to one foreign nation, under any form of government, and pursuing any system of measures, however hostile to this country, and unrelentingly hostile to another nation; and those the two nations with which we have the most interesting relations, and with which it is most important to preserve an equal and impartial regard. Ought we, then, to respect the preference which is given to this man from such *motives*, and by such *friends?*

"As to the other candidate, there is no disagreement as to his character. He is ambitious, selfish, profligate. His ambition is

* Mazzei was a learned Italian, who had resided in Virginia, near Monticello, where he became intimate with Jefferson. Upon his return to Europe he wrote to Jefferson. Jefferson's reply, by some means, got into the newspapers, and made a prodigious clamor. Of this letter, dated April 24, 1795, the following is the part relating to public events:

"The aspect of our politics has wonderfully changed since you left us. In place of that noble love of liberty and republican government, which carried us triumphantly through the war, an Anglican monarchical aristocratical party has sprung up, whose avowed object is to draw over us the substance, as they have already done the forms, of the British government. The main body of our citizens, however, remain true to their republican principles; the whole landed interest is republican, and so is a great mass of talents. Against us are the Executive, the Judiciary, two out of three branches of the Legislature, all the officers of the government; all who want to be officers, all timid men, who prefer the calm of despotism to the boisterous sea of liberty. British merchants, and Americans trading on British capital, speculators and holders in the banks and public funds, a contrivance invented for the purpose of corruption, and for assimilating us in all things to the rotten as well as the sound part of the British model. It would give you a fever were I to name to you the apostates who have gone over to these heresies, men who were Samsons in the field and Solomons in the council, but who have had their heads shorn by the harlot England."

of the worst kind; it is a mere love of power, regardless of fame, but as its instrument; his *selfishness* excludes all social affection,* and his profligacy unrestrained by any moral sentiments, and defying all decency. This is agreed, but then it is known that his manners are plausible — that he is dexterous in the acquisition and use of the means necessary to effect his wishes. Nothing can be a stronger evidence of this than the situation in which he stands at this moment — without any pretension from connections, fame, or services — elevated by his own independent means to the highest point to which all those can carry the most meritorious man in the nation. He holds to no previous theories, but is a mere matter-of-fact man. His very selfishness prevents his entertaining any mischievous predilections for foreign nations. The situation in which he lives has enabled him to discern, and justly appreciate the benefits resulting from our commercial and other national systems, and this same selfishness will afford some security that he will not only patronize their support, but their invigoration.

"There are other considerations. It is very evident that the Jacobins dislike Mr. Burr as President — that they dread his appointment more than even that of General Pinckney.

"On his part, he hates them for the preference given to his rival. He has expressed his displeasure at the publication of his letter by General Smith. This jealousy, and distrust, and dislike, will every day more and more increase, and more and more widen the breach between them. If then Burr should be elected by the Federalists against the hearty opposition of the Jacobins, the wounds mutually given and received will probably be incurable. Each will have committed the unpardonable sin. Burr must depend on good men for his support, and that support he can not receive but by a conformity to their views.

"In these circumstances, then, to what evils shall we expose ourselves by the choice of Burr, which we should escape by the election of Jefferson? It is said that it would be more

* The reader will observe, that many of the leading Federalists, in denouncing Burr, use Hamilton's own phrases — so familiar had Hamilton made those phrases by repetition.

disgraceful to our country, and to the principles of our government. For myself, I declare I think it impossible to preserve the honor of our country or the principles of our Constitution, by a mode of election which was intended to secure to prominent talents and virtues the first honors of our country, and for ever to disgrace the barbarous institutions by which executive power is to be *transmitted through the organs of generation.* We have at one election placed at the head of our government a semi-maniac (Adams), and who, in his soberest senses, is the greatest marplot in nature; and, at the next a feeble and false enthusiastic theorist (Jefferson) and a profligate (Burr) without character and without property, bankrupt in both. But if there remains any thing for us, in this respect, to regard, it is with the minority in the presidential election; and can they be more disgraced than by assenting to the election of Jefferson — the man who has proclaimed them to the world as debased in principle, and as detestable and traitorous in conduct? Burr is indeed unworthy, but the evidence of his unworthiness is neither so extensively known nor so conclusive as that of the other man.

"It must be confessed that there is part of the character of Burr more dangerous than that of Jefferson. Give to the former a probable chance, and he would become a usurper. The latter might not incline, he certainly would not dare, to make the attempt. I do not believe that either would succeed, and I am confident that such a project would be rejected by Burr as visionary.

"At first, I confess, I was strongly disposed to give Jefferson the preference; but the more I have reflected, the more I have inclined to the other; yet, however, I remain unpledged, even to my friends, though I believe I shall not separate from them."

January 10*th.* — A long letter from Hamilton to Gouveneur Morris about the ratification of the convention with France, concludes:

"So our eastern friends want to join the armed neutrality and make war upon Britain. I infer this from their mad pro-

pensity to make *Burr* President. If Jefferson has prejudices leading to that result, he has defects of character to keep him back. Burr, with the same propensities, will find the thing necessary to his projects, and will *dare* to hazard all consequences. They may as well think to bend a giant by a cobweb, as his ambition by promises."

January 15th. — Burr's own letters during this period are quite in his usual manner, light, jocular, and brief. An allusion to the tie occurs in a note to his son-in-law, Mr. Joseph Alston, of South Carolina. "The equality of Jefferson and Burr excites great speculation and much anxiety. I believe that all will be well, and that Jefferson will be our President." The subject is not mentioned in any other of his published letters.

January 16th. — The importance of Mr. Bayard, as a member of the House holding the entire vote of a State, induced Hamilton to try all his power to bring him over to his opinion. To Bayard, accordingly, he now writes the most carefully elaborated letter that the crisis elicited. It is the most complete expression of Hamilton's feelings as a patriot and as a partizan, that has come down to us.

"I was glad to find, my dear sir, by your letter," he began, "that you had not yet determined to go, with the consent of the Federal party, in support of Mr. Burr; and that you were resolved to hold yourself disengaged till the moment of final decision. Your resolution to separate yourself, in this instance, from the Federal party, if your conviction shall be strong of the unfitness of Mr. Burr, is certainly laudable. So much does it coincide with my ideas, that if the party shall, by supporting Mr. Burr as President, adopt him for their official chief, I shall be obliged to consider myself as an *isolated* man. It will be impossible for me to reconcile with my motives of *honor* or policy, the continuing to be of a party which, according to my apprehension, will have degraded itself and the country.

"I am sure, nevertheless, that the motives of many will be

good, and I shall never cease to esteem the individuals, though I shall deplore a step which I fear experience will show to be a very fatal one. Among the letters which I receive, assigning the reasons, *pro* and *con.*, for preferring Burr to Jefferson, I observe no small exaggeration to the prejudice of the latter, and some things taken for granted as to the former, which are at least questionable. Perhaps myself the first, at some expense of popularity, to unfold the true character of Jefferson, it is too late for me to become his apologist. Nor have I any disposition to do it.

"I admit that his politics are tinctured with fanaticism; that he is too much in earnest in his democracy; that he has been a mischievous enemy to the principal measures of our past administration; that he is crafty and persevering in his objects; that he is not scrupulous about the means of success, nor very mindful of truth, and that he is a contemptible hypocrite. But it is not true, as is alleged, that he is an enemy to the power of the executive, or that he is for confounding all the powers in the House of Representatives. It is a fact, which I have frequently mentioned, that, while we were in the administration together, he was generally for a large construction of the executive authority, and not backward to act upon it in cases which coincided with his views. Let it be added that, in his theoretic ideas, he has considered as improper the participations of the Senate in the executive authority. I have more than once made the reflection that, viewing himself as the reversioner, he was solicitous to come into the possession of a good estate. Nor is it true, that Jefferson is zealous enough to do any thing in pursuance of his principles, which will contravene his popularity or his interest. He is as likely as any man I know to temporize; to calculate what will be likely to promote his own reputation and advantage, and the probable result of such a temper is the preservation of systems, though originally opposed, which being once established, could not be overturned without danger to the person who did it. To my mind, a true estimate of Mr. Jefferson's character warrants the expectation of a temporizing, rather than a violent system. That Jefferson has manifested a culpable predilection

for France is certainly true; but I think it a question whether it did not proceed quite as much from her *popularity* among us as from sentiment; and in proportion as that popularity is diminished, his zeal will cool. Add to this that there is no fair reason to suppose him capable of being corrupted, which is a security that he will not go beyond certain limits. It is not at all improbable that, under the change of circumstances, Jefferson's Gallicism has considerably abated.

"As to Burr, these things are admitted, and indeed can not be denied, that he is a man of *extreme* and *irregular* ambition; that he is *selfish* to a degree which excludes all social affections; and that he is decidedly *profligate*. But it is said, 1st, that he is *artful* and *dexterous* to accomplish his ends; 2d, that he holds no pernicious theories, but is a mere *matter-of fact* man; 3d, that his very selfishness is a guard against mischievous foreign predilection; 4th, that his *local situation* has enabled him to appreciate the utility of our commercial and fiscal systems, and the same qualities of selfishness will lead him to support and invigorate them; 5th, that he is now disliked by the Jacobins; that his elevation will be a mortal stab to them, breed an invincible hatred to him, and compel him to lean on the Federalists; 6th, Burr's ambition will be checked by his good sense, by the manifest impossibility of succeeding in any scheme of usurpation, and that, if attempted, there is nothing to fear from the attempt.

"These topics are, in my judgment, more plausible than solid. As to the first point, the fact must be admitted; but those qualities are objections rather than recommendations, when they are under the direction of bad principles. As to the second point, too much is taken for granted. If Burr's conversation is to be credited, he is not very far from being a visionary. He has quoted to me *Connecticut** as an example of the success of the democratic theory, and as authority, serious doubts whether it was not a good one. It is ascertained that in some instances he has talked perfect *Godwinism*. I have myself heard him speak with applause of the French

* The colonial government of Connecticut was more democratic than that of the other colonies.

system, as unshackling the mind, and leaving it to its natural energies; and I have been present when he has contended against banking systems with earnestness, and with the same arguments that Jefferson would use. (Note by Hamilton. "Yet he has lately, by a trick, established a *bank*, a perfect monster in its principles, but a very convenient instrument of *profit and influence*.")

"The truth is, that Burr is a man of a very subtle imagination, and a mind of this make is rarely free from ingenious whimsies. Yet I admit that he has no fixed theory, and that his peculiar notions will easily give way to his interest. But is it a recommendation to have *no theory?* Can that man be a systematic or able statesman who has none? I believe not. *No general principles* will hardly work much better than erroneous ones.

"As to the third point, it is certain that Burr, generally speaking, has been as warm a partizan of France as Jefferson; that he has, in some instances, shown himself to be so with passion. But if it was from calculation, who will say that his calculations will not continue him so? His selfishness, so far from being an obstacle, may be a prompter. If corrupt, as well as selfish, he may be a partisan for the sake of aid to his views. No man has trafficked more than he in the floating passions of the multitude. Hatred to Great Britain and attachment to France in the public mind will naturally lead a man of his selfishness, attached to place and power, to favor France and oppose Great Britain. The Gallicism of many of our patriots is to be thus resolved, and, in my opinion, it is morally certain that Burr will continue to be influenced by this calculation.

"As to the fourth point, the instance I have cited with respect to banks, proves that the argument is not to be relied upon. If there was much in it, why does Chancellor Livingston maintain that we ought not to cultivate navigation, but ought to let foreigners be our carriers? France is of this opinion too; and Burr, for some reason or other, will be very apt to be of the opinion of France.

"As to the fifth point, nothing can be more fallacious. It

is demonstrated by recent facts that Burr is *solicitous* to keep upon *anti-Federal* ground to avoid compromitting himself by any engagement with the Federalists. With or without such engagement, he will easily persuade his former friends that he does not stand on that ground; and after their first resentment, they will be glad to rally under him. In the mean time, he will take care not to disoblige them; and he will always court those among them who are best fitted for tools. He will never choose to lean on good men, because he knows that they will never support his bad projects; but, instead of this, he will endeavor to disorganize both parties, and to form out of them a third, composed of men fitted by their characters to be conspirators and instruments of such projects.

"That this will be his future conduct, may be inferred from his past plan, and from the admitted quality of irregular ambition. Let it be remembered that Mr. Burr has never appeared solicitous for fame, and that great ambition, unchecked by principle, or the love of glory, is an unruly tyrant, which never can keep long in a course which good men will approve. As to the last point, the proposition is against the experience of all times. Ambition, without principle, was never long under the guidance of good sense. Besides that, really, the force of Mr. Burr's understanding is much overrated. He is far more *cunning* than wise, far more *dexterous* than *able*. .

["*Very, very confidential.* — In my opinion he is inferior in real ability to Jefferson. There are also facts against the supposition. It is past all doubt that he has blamed me for not having improved the situation I once was in to change the government. That when answered that this could not have been done without guilt, he replied, *Les grands âmes se soucient peu des petits moraux;** that when told the thing was never practicable, from the genius and situation of the country, he answered, 'That depends upon the estimate we form of the human passions, and of the means of influencing them.' Does this prove that Mr. Burr would consider a scheme of usurpation as visionary?]

"The truth is, with great apparent coldness he is the most

* Great souls care little for the minor morals.

sanguine man in the world. He thinks every thing possible to adventure and perseverance; and though I believe he will fail, I think it almost certain he will attempt usurpation, and the attempt will involve great mischief.

"But there is one point of view which seems to me decisive. If the anti-Federalists, who prevailed in the election, are left to take their own man, they remain responsible, and the Federalists remain *free*, *united*, and without *stain*, in a situation to resist with effect pernicious measures. If the Federalists substitute Burr, they adopt him, and become answerable for him. Whatever may be the theory of the case, abroad and at *home* (for so from the beginning it will be taught), Mr. Burr must become, *in fact*, the man of our party; and if he acts ill, we must share in the blame and disgrace. By adopting him, we do all we can to reconcile the minds of Federalists to him, and we prepare them for the effectual operation of his acts. He will, doubtless, gain many of them; and the Federalists will become a disorganized and contemptible party. Can there be any serious question between the policy of leaving the anti-Federalists to be answerable for the elevation of an objectionable man, and that of adopting ourselves, and becoming answerable for a man who, on all hands, is acknowledged to be a complete Catiline? 'Tis enough to state the question to indicate the answer, if reason, not passion, presides in the decision.

"You may communicate this and my former letter to discreet and confidential friends."

Upon this letter a remark or two may be permitted. A man who, after knowing Jefferson as intimately as Hamilton had, could deliberately pronounce him "a contemptible hypocrite," was no judge of men; and nothing, therefore, which he says of an opponent has any value. Jefferson still lives in the history of his administration — lives in the stamp he left upon his country's intellect — lives in the nine volumes of his letters. Read all these, and learn whether Thomas Jefferson was or was not a contemptible hypocrite, or in any sense contemptible. The horror which Hamilton expresses of Godwin, that gentle-hearted enthusiast, that passionate lover of justice and

of man, that friend of the most loveable gentleman of his day, Charles Lamb, is ineffably absurd. If Burr really said that great souls do not much regard the minor moralities, he uttered as deadly a falsehood as ever fell from lips. Great souls, indeed, know no *minor* morals; to them all morals are great, august, controlling. They know no degrees in right and wrong. Hamilton, in his letter to Governor Jay, advising the defeat of the Republicans by a governmental trick, utters sentiments not unlike that which he here attributes to Burr. But no man who knows men will judge of what a man will *do* by what, in unguarded moments, he says.*

With regard to Hamilton's chronic dread of Burr's usurping the government, it was only one of the symptoms of the *Burriphobia* under which he labored. Scheming for a *reëlection* is enough to keep an ambitious man amused in the presidential chair. Two things, however, strengthened Hamilton's fear of usurpation. One was the recent example of Bonaparte; the other, the very general opinion among the wealthier classes in the United States, that the Constitution had been tried and found wanting. Hamilton was of that opinion. Of the two, Hamilton was more likely to have made an attempt to subvert the government than Burr; for Hamilton was already convinced of the necessity of its subversion. If Burr had formed any thing like a *purpose*, however vague, however remote its probable execution, to seize the supreme authority, he would not have begun by awakening the suspicions of the man who would certainly be the first to lead an outraged people against the usurper.

January (No date named, but probably about the 20th). Hamilton writes, in hot haste, to Gouveneur Morris, at

* Jefferson's *integrity*, as a man, has never been disputed, I believe. But in one of his letters to Dr. Rush, dated January 3, 1808, the following passage occurs: "Thus I estimate the qualities of the mind: 1st. Good Humor, 2d. Integrity, 3d. Industry, 4th. Science. The preference of the first to the second quality may not at first be acquiesced in; but, certainly, we had all rather associate with a good-humored, light-principled man, than with an ill-tempered rigorist in morality."

Washington, to communicate some information for use against Burr.

"I hasten," he says, "to give you some information which may be useful. I know, as a fact, that overtures have been made by leading individuals of the Federal party to Mr. Burr, who declines to give any assurance respecting his future intentions and conduct, saying that to do it might injure him with his friends, and hinder their coöperation; that all ought to be inferred from the necessity of his future situation, as it regarded the disappointment and animosity of the anti-Federalists; that the Federalists, relying upon this, might proceed in the certainty that, upon a second ballot, New York and Tennessee would join him. It is likewise ascertained that he perfectly understands himself with Edward Livingston, who will be his *agent* at the seat of government.

"Thus you see that Mr. Burr is resolved to preserve himself in a situation to adhere to his former friends, engagements, and projects, and to use the Federalists as tools of his aggrandizement.

"He will satisfy them that he has kept himself free to continue his relations with them, and as many of them are secretly attached to him, they will all be speedily induced to rally under his standard, to which he will add the unprincipled of our party, and he will laugh at the rest.

"It is a fact that Mr. Burr is now in frequent and close conference with a Frenchman, who is suspected of being an agent of the French government, and it is not to be doubted that he will be the firm ally of Buonaparte.

"You are at liberty to show this letter to such friends as you think fit, especially Mr. Bayard, of Delaware, in whose principles and sound sense I have much confidence.

"Depend upon it, men never played a more foolish game than will do the Federalists, if they support Burr."

From this letter we learn, that Hamilton's *information* respecting an opponent must be received with the same caution as his *opinion.* Edward Livingston was no agent of Burr's. He was, at this time, as will soon appear, true to himself and to his party, and one of Jefferson's most confidential friends.

January 21st. — A hurried letter from Hamilton to Sedgwick. Refers him to his long letter to Bayard. Begs him to reconsider his preference for Burr. Adds: "I never was so much mistaken as I shall be if our friends, in the event of their success, do not rue the preference they will give to that Catiline."

Hamilton's warnings were little heeded by the Federalists. His denunciations of Colonel Burr were attributed to professional jealousy, or personal enmity, and the Federal members burned with desire to disappoint the Republicans by electing Burr.

The day for the election in the House of Representatives arrived. The House consisted of one hundred and six members, of which a majority were Federalists. There were then sixteen States in the Union; a *majority of the States* was necessary to an election; and the House was limited in its choice to the two candidates who had received the highest number of electoral votes. If a simple majority of the *members* would have sufficed, Burr would certainly have been elected on the first ballot. Before proceeding to the great business of the day, the House resolved not to adjourn till a President had been chosen — which, John Randolph says, was a Federal expedient designed to starve or worry the undecided members into voting for Burr. During the balloting, the public were excluded from the galleries, but, on the floor of the House, seats were provided for the Senators and the President. It chanced that some of the members were sick at the time — for them sofas were provided. One gentleman, who was seriously ill, was attended in the House by his wife.

On the first ballot eight States voted for Jefferson, namely, New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Georgia, and Tennessee. Six States voted for Burr, namely, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Delaware, and South Carolina. Vermont and Maryland were divided equally between the two candidates. Neither on this ballot, nor on any future one, did Jefferson receive more than fifty-one votes. The balloting con-

tinued, at intervals, all that day, all through the night, and until noon of the day following. The vote was taken twenty-nine times without the slightest change or prospect of change. Then the exhausted members evaded their resolution not to adjourn, by agreeing to take a recess. Dogged obstinacy sat on every countenance.

For seven days the country was kept in suspense, and Rumor, with all her tongues, was busy. During this period, and immediately after it, certain letters were written, and entries made in private journals, the perusal of which will complete the reader's knowledge of the Tie, and the Tie intrigues.

February 10th. — On the first day of the balloting, Judge Cooper of New York (father of J. Fennimore Cooper), a remarkably 'highflying Federalist,' and, at that time, a member of the House, wrote as follows to his friend Thomas Morris:

"We have this day locked ourselves up by a rule to proceed to choose a President before we adjourn. * * * We shall run Burr perseveringly. You shall hear of the result instantly after the fact is ascertained. *A little good management would have secured our object on the first vote*, but now it is too late for any operation to be gone into, except that of adhering to Burr, and leave the consequences to those who have heretofore been his friends. If we succeed, a faithful support must, on our part, be given to his administration, which, I hope, will be wise and energetic."

Two days after, Judge Cooper writes again to Mr. Morris: "We have postponed, until to-morrow 11 o'clock, the voting for President. All stand firm. Jefferson eight—Burr six—divided two. *Had Burr done any thing for himself, he would long ere this have been President.* If a majority would answer, he would have it on every vote."

February 10th. — This was the second day of the balloting. Jefferson, who was then in his place as President of the Senate, enters in his diary the following gossip:

"Edward Livingston tells me that Bayard applied to-day or last night, to General Samuel Smith, and represented to

him the expediency of his coming over to the States who vote for Burr, that there was nothing in the way of appointment which he might not command, and particularly mentioned the secretaryship of the navy. Smith asked him if he was authorized to make the offer. He said he was authorized. Smith told this to Livingston, and to W. C. Nichols, who confirms it to me. Bayard in like manner tempted Livingston, not by offering any particular office, but by representing to him his, Livingston's, intimacy and connection with Burr; that from him he had every thing to expect, if he would come over to him. To Dr. Linn of New Jersey, they have offered the government of New Jersey."

The part which Bayard took in the business will be narrated by himself in a moment. Upon the publication of the volume of Mr. Jefferson's work which contains the above, General Smith, then a Senator from Maryland, declared in the Senate that no such proposition was made to him by Mr. Bayard.

February 14*th*, Jefferson records the following: "General Armstrong tells me that Gouveneur Morris, in conversation with him to-day on the scene which is passing, expressed himself thus. 'How comes it,' says he, 'that Burr, who is four hundred miles off (at Albany) has agents here at work with great activity, while Mr. Jefferson, who is on the spot, does nothing?'"

A year or two after the "scene" was over, it became the subject of conversation, one day, at Jefferson's table. After dinner, Jefferson wrote in his diary as follows: "Matthew Lyon noticed the insinuations against the Republicans of Washington, pending the presidential election, and expressed his wish that every thing was spoken out which was known; that it would then appear on which side there was a bidding for votes, and he declared that John Brown of Rhode Island, urging him to vote for Colonel Burr, used these words, 'What is it you want, Colonel Lyon? Is it office, is it money? Only say what you want, and you shall have it.'"

Who can believe a man to whom such a proposition could have been even remotely hinted? Jefferson shows himself weak in recording stuff of this kind.

That *every thing* against Burr may appear, I copy the following from Jefferson's diary of a still later date, January, 1804: "Colonel Hitchburn of Massachusetts reminded me of a letter he had written me from Philadelphia, pending the presidential election, says he did not therein give the details. That he was in company at Philadelphia with Colonel Burr and ———: that in the course of the conversation on the election, Colonel Burr said, 'We must have a President, and a constitutional one, in some way.' 'How is it to be done?' says Hitchburn; 'Mr. Jefferson's friends will not quit him, and his enemies are not strong enough to carry another.' 'Why,' says Burr, 'our friends must join the Federalists, and give the President.' The next morning at breakfast, Colonel Burr repeated nearly the same, saying, 'We can not be without a President, our friends must join the Federal vote.' 'But,' says Hitchburn, 'we shall then be without a Vice-President, who is to be our Vice-President?' Colonel Burr answered, 'Mr. Jefferson.'"

This sounds like the toadying tale of an office-seeker.

February 15th. — Mr. Jefferson writes to his friend Monroe: "If the Federalists could have been permitted to pass a law for putting the government into the hands of an officer, they would certainly have prevented an election. But we thought it best to declare, one and all, openly and firmly, that the day such an act passed, the middle States would arm; and that no such usurpation, even for a single day, should be submitted to. This first shook them; and they were completely alarmed at the resource for which we declared, namely, to reorganize the government, and to amend it. The very word *convention* gives them the horrors, as in the present democratical spirit of America they fear they should lose some of the favorite morsels of the Constitution."

One of Mr. Jefferson's letters to Dr. Rush records a scene that occurred, during this terrible week, between himself and President Adams:

"When the election between Burr and myself," wrote Jefferson, "was kept in suspense by the Federalists, and they

were meditating to place the President of the Senate at the head of the government, I called on Mr. Adams, with a view to have this desperate measure prevented by his negative. He grew warm in an instant, and said, with a vehemence he had not used toward me before,

"'Sir, the event of the election is in your own power. You have only to say you will do justice to the public creditors, maintain the navy, and not disturb those holding offices, and the government will instantly be put into your hands. We know it is the wish of the people it should be so.'

"'Mr. Adams,' said I, 'I know not what part of my conduct, in either public or private life, can have authorized a doubt of my fidelity to the public engagements. I say, however, I will not come into the government by capitulation — I will not enter on it but in perfect freedom to follow the dictates of my own judgment.'

"I had before given the same answer to the same intimation from Gouveneur Morris.

"'Then,' said he, 'things must take their course.'

"I turned the conversation to something else, and soon took my leave. It was the first time in our lives we had ever parted with any thing like dissatisfaction."

February 22d. — The great question had been decided, but Hamilton had not heard the news. He writes to-day, a last letter to a friend at Washington, mentioning a fact which, he hoped, would utterly defeat the election of Burr. As one of the hundred proofs of Burr's consistency and integrity, as a politician, it deserves attention. Hamilton says:

"After my ill success hitherto, I ought perhaps, in prudence, to say nothing further on the subject. But situated as things now are, I certainly have no advice to give. Yet I may, without impropriety, communicate a fact — it is this:

"Colonel Burr is taking an active *personal part* in favor of Mr. Clinton, against Mr. Van Rensselaer, as Governor of this State. I have, *upon my honor*, direct and indubitable evidence, that between two and three weeks past, he wrote a very urgent letter to *Oliver Phelps*, of the western part of

this State, to induce his exertions in favor of Clinton. Is not this an unequivocal confirmation of what I predicted, that he will, in any event, continue to play the Jacobin game? Can any thing else explain his conduct at such a moment, and under such circumstances? I might add several other things to prove that he is resolved to adhere to, and cultivate his own party, who lately, more than ever, have shown the cloven foot of *rank Jacobinism.*"

To what a ridiculous pitch Hamilton's feelings were wrought during the struggle, is shown by his subsequent avowal to Mr. Bayard: "It is believed to be an alarming fact, that while the question of the presidential election was pending in the House of Representatives, parties were organizing in several of the cities, in the event of their being no election, *to cut off the leading Federalists and seize the government!*"

March 8th. — After seven days of occasional dogged balloting, the excitement in the country ever on the increase, and threatening to become serious, the struggle was terminated by Mr. Bayard. The manner in which he did this he related at the time in a letter to Hamilton, which letter is an important link in Burr's vindication.

"Your views," wrote Mr. Bayard, on the 8th of March, "in relation to the election differed very little from my own, but I was obliged to yield to a torrent, which I perceived might be diverted, but could not be opposed.

"In one case I was willing to take Burr, but I never considered it as a case likely to happen. If by his conduct he had completely forfeited the confidence and friendship of his party, and left himself no resort but the support of the Federalists, there are many considerations which would have induced me to prefer him to Jefferson. But I was enabled soon to discover that he was determined not to shackle himself with Federal principles; and it became evident that if he got in without being absolutely committed to his own party, that he would be disposed and obliged to play the game of M'Kean upon an improved plan and enlarged scale.

"In the origin of the business, I had contrived to lay hold

of all the doubtful votes in the House, which enabled me, according to views which presented themselves, to protract or terminate the controversy.

"This arrangement was easily made from the opinion readily adopted from the consideration that, representing a small State without resources which could supply the means of self-protection, I should not dare to proceed to any lengths which would jeopardize the Constitution, or the safety of my State. When the experiment was fully made, and acknowledged upon all hands to have completely ascertained that Burr was resolved not to commit himself, and that nothing remained but to appoint a President by law, or leave the government without one, I came out with the most explicit and determined declaration of voting for Jefferson. You can not well imagine the clamor and vehement invective to which I was subjected for some days. We had several caucuses. All acknowledged that nothing but desperate measures remained, which several were disposed to adopt, and but few were willing openly to disapprove. We broke up each time in confusion and discord, and the manner of the last ballot was arranged but a few minutes before the ballot was given. Our former harmony, however, has since been restored.

"The public declarations of my intention to vote for Jefferson, to which I have alluded, were made without a general consultation, knowing that it would be an easier task to close the breach which I foresaw, when it was the result of an act done without concurrence, than if it had proceeded from one against a decision of the party. Had it not been for a single gentleman from Connecticut, the eastern States would finally have voted in blank, in the same manner as done by South Carolina and Delaware; but because he refused, the rest of the delegation refused; and because Connecticut insisted on continuing the ballot for Burr, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island refused to depart from their former vote.

"*The means existed of electing Burr, but this required his coöperation. By deceiving one man* (*a great blockhead*), *and tempting two* (*not incorruptible*), *he might have secured*

a majority of the States. He will never have another chance of being President of the United States; and the little use he has made of the one which has occurred, gives me but an humble opinion of the talents of an unprincipled man."

Thus ended the great struggle, during which the Constitution was subjected to the severest strain it has ever known, and bore it without one moment's real danger of giving way. Its history has been here given in the language of Colonel Burr's bitter enemies. The impression which that history so related will leave on the mind of the reader, can not be foreseen. It was the diligent reading of Burr's political history in the letters, pamphlets, and newspapers of his enemies and opponents, which convinced *me* that, as a partizan, he acted throughout with the strictest honor and consistency!

The 4th of March, 1801, was a day of rejoicing throughout the United States. After a period of painful anxiety, the country breathed again. Processions, orations, and banquets testified, in the larger cities and towns, to the public joy. The inauguration was happily achieved at the usual hour. In the evening, President Jefferson and Vice-President Burr received the congratulations of gentlemen of both parties at the presidential mansion, where all but a few of the most bigoted Federal Senators and Representatives were to be seen in the throng that gathered round the victorious chiefs. The inauguration speech had lulled the apprehensions of the Federalists, and the new order of things was accepted with a good grace.

Far away, at Albany, the Republicans of the New York legislature were banqueting hilariously. In reporting the proceedings of this occasion, the Albany *Register* informed the world that the company "did not forget the important success of the Republicans in the choice of that firm and tried patriot, Aaron Burr, as Vice-President of the United States." Next to the toast given in honor of the President, the following was offered:

"Aaron Burr, Vice-President of the United States; his uni-

form and patriotic exertions in favor of Republicanism eclipsed only by his late disinterested conduct."

Not a whisper of dissension was heard. De Witt Clinton, who had held aloof from the great campaign of 1800, was present at the banquet, and offered this toast:

"Our Republican brethren of the South — may we always be united with them in the elevation of patriots, and the promotion of good principles."

Fiery John Adams could not submit with decent dignity to his fate. "The last day," says Jefferson, "of his political power, the last hour, and even beyond midnight, were employed in filling all offices, and especially permanent ones, with the bitterest Federalists, and providing for me the alternative, either to execute the government by my enemies, whose study it would be to thwart and defeat all my measures, or to incur the odium of such numerous removals from office as might bear me down." By daybreak on the morning of the inauguration the ex-President had left the seat of government for ever.*

The Federal party tasted the sweets of power no more. The leaders continued, and continue, to forebode the country's ruin, while they enjoy the lion's share of its prosperity.

Hamilton bought a few acres of land near the city, and relieved the monotony of law by improving his grounds. When next he wrote to General Pinckney, he begins his letter by requesting his friend to send him some Carolina melon-seed

* John Adams went to his grave without understanding the nature of the revolution which ousted him. In 1811 he wrote to Dr. Rush: "In point of Republicanism, all the difference I ever knew or could discover between you and me, or between Jefferson and me, consisted,

"1. In the difference between speeches and messages. I was a monarchist because I thought a speech more manly, more respectful to Congress and the nation. Jefferson and Rush preferred messages.

"2. I held levees once a week, that all my time might not be wasted by idle visits. Jefferson's whole eight years was a levee.

"3. I dined a large company once or twice a week. Jefferson dined a dozen every day.

"4. Jefferson and Rush were for liberty and straight hair. I thought curled hair was as Republican as straight."

for his new garden, and some Carolina parroquets for his daughter. "A garden, you know, is a very usual refuge for a disappointed politician," said he. His letters, indeed, were still full of politics, but they were often couched in the language of despair. "Mine is an odd destiny," he wrote to Gouveneur Morris. "Perhaps no man in the United States has sacrificed or done more for the present Constitution than myself; and, contrary to all my anticipations of its fate, as you know, from the very beginning. I am still laboring to prop the frail and worthless fabric. Yet I have the murmurs of its friends, no less than the curses of its foes, for my reward. What can I do better than withdraw from the scene? Every day proves to me, more and more, that this American world was not made for me."

The country was at peace. The strife of parties, for the moment, ceased. The real wish of the people was so completely satisfied by the election of Jefferson, that, for twenty-four years he and his friends kept possession of the government without serious opposition. Jefferson inherited the errors of Adams and the able devices of Hamilton; by abandoning the former, and retaining the latter, and, above all, by paying homage to the republican idea in the minor arrangements of his house and administration, he won a vast and immovable popularity.

Minor arrangements, do I call them? Of all the facts that contributed to the popularity which America enjoyed in Europe, down to the beginning of the present contention between Democracy and Slavery, a popularity which *peopled* the free States, no tale was so captivating to the European imagination, sick of tawdry relics of barbarous ages, sick of courts and their stupid usages, as this: *In America any man may go and see the President, and shake hands with him.* Cheap land was not the attraction. Land was cheap in Australia, in Canada, in Brazil, in Virginia. It was that little fact, and what it implied, which freighted our homeward-bound ships with wealth in its most condensed and productive form, namely, honest, stalwart human beings!

CHAPTER XVII.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT.

The Office of Vice-President — Marriage of Theodosia — Her Son — Burr's delight in Him — His Style of Living — His Courtship of Celeste — His Popularity and General Good Fortune.

We behold our hero now upon the summit of his career. At the age of forty-five, ten years after becoming known in national politics, he stands one step below the highest place to which by politics a man can rise.

The office of Vice-President of the United States, besides the *chance* which gives it importance, has, in any case, an odor of nationality about it which gives it dignity. Impetuous John Adams called it an insignificant office. But that was when the old war-horse heard the noise of battle in the House of Representatives, or saw it waging before him in the Senate, and longed, as of old, to plunge into the thickest of the fight. Adams really enjoyed the safe honors of the place as well as any man. At that day, something of the old sanctity still clung to high office, and it was more to be Vice-President than it is now. Burr, too, stood in the line of succession. Adams rose from the second office to the first, and Jefferson had just done the same. That Aaron Burr should in like manner be advanced, was what precedent indicated, what his partisans counted on, and what the people naturally looked for. Meanwhile, he wore his honors with the airy dignity which belonged to the man. It is apparent in his merry, sprightly correspondence, that he took pleasure in filling a place that called into conspicuous exercise the very qualities in which he excelled all the public men of his time.

He was happy in his domestic circumstances. His two step-sons, to whom he had ever shown more than a father's

liberality, had prospered well in life. One of them was now Judge Prevost, Recorder of the city of New York; the other, a country gentleman of competent estate in Westchester county. A young lady of French extraction, whom he had, in effect, adopted, and who had grown up and been educated with Theodosia, and whom he loved only less than his own child, was married, about this time, to a young man of a distinguished southern family.

And Theodosia was married. While the politicians supposed that Colonel Burr was full of the alleged tie negotiation, and some of them imagined that he was intriguing with all his might for the presidency, he was, in reality, occupied with the marriage of his daughter with Joseph Alston of South Carolina, which occurred while the great question was pending. This, with his duties in the legislature, absorbed his thoughts and time. It was a marriage in every respect fortunate and suitable. Mr. Alston was twenty-two years of age, a gentleman in all the senses of the word, and possessed of considerable property in rice plantations. He was also a man of talent, as is evident from his subsequent career, and from the elegance, ingenuity, and force of his letters to Theodosia. When first he became her accepted suitor, he was merely the young man of fortune, without any definite object in life. He had been admitted to the bar, it is true, but had never had nor sought professional employment. Colonel Burr fired him with his own ambition, stimulated his powers, urged and directed his studies, advised his occasional appearance in the courts, and induced him to enter the political arena. Mr. Alston soon made himself prominent in the politics of his native State, of which, in due time, he became governor. "Burr was a princely father-in-law," says a gentleman still living, who was intimate with both families.

I can well believe it. "You know," he wrote to Theodosia, after she had gone to her southern home, "that you and your concerns are the highest, the dearest interest I have in this world, one in comparison with which all others are insignificant." Father and daughter were on delightful terms with one another: he playful, tender, considerate, wise, confiding

every thing to her; she amusing him with her graceful wit, cheering him with her affection, reposing in him an absolute trust. He still directed her studies. Indeed, the burden of his advice to her always was: Never cease to improve your mind; better lose your head than your habits of study. "The longer I live," she writes to him, "the more frequently the truth of your advice evinces itself, that occupation is necessary to give us command over ourselves." That is an eminently Burr-ian maxim.

Her removal to a State which was then twenty days' journey from New York, was a drawback to his happiness in her marriage. But, during these happy years, Theodosia's visits to the home of her childhood were frequent and long. And who so much caressed as the beautiful young matron from South Carolina, the daughter of the Vice-President? She led the society of two States; and was worthy to lead it. It is not difficult to discover that she preferred her northern home. She declared that the society of New York was so superior to that of the South, that a *woman* must be a fool who denied it. Even our scenery was incomparably finer, she thought. One who only knows the outskirts of New York, as they now appear, tunneled, excavated, shantied, and every way disfigured by the advance-guard of the marching metropolis, can not recognize Theodosia's description of the scene as it was in 1802. After returning to her father's town-house one day, from a visit to Richmond Hill, which excursion she called "a ride into the country," she wrote to her husband thus: "Never did I behold this island so beautiful. The variety of vivid greens; the finely-cultivated fields and gaudy gardens; the neat, cool air of the cits' boxes, peeping through straight rows of tall poplars, and the elegance of some gentlemen's seats, commanding a view of the majestic Hudson, and the high, dark shores of New Jersey, altogether form a scene so lively, so touching, and to me now so new, that I was in constant rapture."

In due time her boy, her only child, was born, whom she named after her father. Henceforth this boy, next to Theodosia, was the dearest object on earth to Aaron Burr. Surely,

never was grandchild so loved as this grandchild was by him. He was never weary of its company. He could never hear enough of its ways and words. Theodosia filled whole letters with narratives of the boy's small exploits and quaint sayings; and her father would answer: "You are a dear, good little girl to write me so, and of dear little *Gampy*, too, so much; *yet never enough.* God bless thee." *Gampy* was the child's mode of pronouncing *Grandpa*, and Burr never called him by any other name, unless it was Gampillus, Gampillo, Gamp, or some other variation of the same word. How proud they all were of the child's robust beauty and his quick intelligence, and, what the grandfather valued above all virtues, his courage. One scene of his early years gave Burr inexpressible delight to witness, and, in after times, to describe. The boy was playing alone in a field, with a stick in his hand, as tall as himself, while his parents and grandfather were looking on from a distance. Suddenly, a goat that was grazing near the child began to make hostile demonstrations, lowering his head and sideling up to the boy, in the way usual with irate goats before making an assault. The boy was evidently frightened. Still, he faced the enemy. The goat advanced close to him, when, just as the animal was about to open an attack, little *Gamp* lifted his stick with a mighty effort, and brought it down whack upon the goat's head, which so astonished the beast that he ran away. The child was only in his third or fourth year when this occurred. Words can not express the rapture with which the grandfather saw the boy's gallantry. From that hour he bore him in his heart of hearts, and loved all the children in the world better for this one's sake.

To add to his good fortune, his pecuniary prospects brightened, on his accession to office. New York was then a city of 65,000 inhabitants, and was advancing with great rapidity. Theodosia herself remarks, in one of her letters, that "in ten or twenty years, a hundred and thirty acres of land on New York Island will become a principality." Colonel Burr owned a large tract of land about Richmond Hill. His grounds extended to the North River, and, nearer the city, there was a piece of water upon his estate which elderly inhabitants may still

remember as the favorite skating-place of their boyhood. It was called "Burr's Pond" years after it ceased to be his, down even to the time when it was filled in, and built over. The progress of the city raised the value of all the land on the island, and particularly of that which, like Richmond Hill, lay within half-an-hour's ride of the city. About this time, Colonel Burr was much occupied with negotiating with Mr. John Jacob Astor for the sale of part of his Richmond Hill estate. At length, Mr. Astor bought all but the mansion and a few acres around it, for the sum of one hundred and forty thousand dollars. The bargain, for some reason, was afterward canceled. But, finally, the sale was completed, and Colonel Burr was, for the time, delivered from his pecuniary embarrassments. He even had thoughts of buying another estate further up the island. It is evident that his style of living was such as was then supposed to *become* an elevated station. Half a dozen horses, a town-house and country-house, a numerous retinue of servants, and a French cook, were among the sumptuosities of his establishment. Jerome Bonaparte, then on the eve of his marriage with Miss Patterson, was entertained at dinner and at breakfast by the Vice-President, who invited large companies to meet the future monarch, in whose ante-chambers Burr was, one day, to kick his heels, a suppliant for an audience.

Richmond Hill was without a mistress. In these fortunate years it was that Colonel Burr paid his court to one of the loveliest of Philadelphia's ever lovely belles, and had the narrowest escape from a second marriage.

They met, "'twas in a crowd;" and each was smitten with the other's pleasant qualities. Again, he saw her at her father's table, where his attentions were equally pointed and welcome. A *tête-à-tête*, which he sought was interrupted by the entrance of *le père*, but her manner seemed to beckon him on. He was almost in love. Summoning her father to his apartments by note, and the old gentleman appearing within the hour, the enamored one came to the point with a promptness and self-possession impossible in a lover under forty.

"Is Celeste engaged?"

Chadron State College Library
Chadron, Nebraska

"She is not."

"Would it be agreeable to her parents if Colonel Burr should make overtures for her hand?"

"It would be *most* agreeable."

The lady had gone to spend some days six miles into the country, and thither her lover rides the next morning, with an eager, but composed mind. Celeste enters the drawing-room, though he had not asked especially for her. Conversation ensues. She is all wit and gayety; more charming than ever, the lover thinks. He tries to turn the conversation to the subject nearest his heart; but she, with the good-humored graceful malice of lovely woman, defeats his endeavors, and so at last, quite captivated, he takes his leave.

The same hour on the following morning finds him, once more, *tête-à-tête* with the beautiful Celeste. Conversation again. But, this time, the great question was put. To the surprise of this renowned lady-killer, Celeste replies that she is firmly resolved *never to marry!*

"I am very sorry to hear it, madam; I had promised myself great happiness, but can not blame your determination."

She replied: "No; certainly, sir, you can not; for I recollect to have heard you express surprise that any woman should marry, and you gave such reasons, and with so much eloquence, as made an indelible impression on my mind.

The disappointed swain received the rebuff with perfect courtesy and good humor. They parted the best friends.

"Have you any commands to town, madam? I wish you a good morning."

Two days passed. Then, a note from Celeste surprised the Rejected, informing him that she was in town for a few hours, and would be glad to see him. He was puzzled, and hastened to her for a solution. The interview lasted two hours, in the course of which the tender subject was daintily touched, but the lover forbore to renew his suit; and the conversation ended without result. Next day, another note from the lady, sent in from the country, expressing "an unalterable determination never again to listen to his suit, and requesting that the subject might never be renewed." Late in the evening

of the same day, on returning to his lodgings, the Vice-President learned that a boy had been three times that afternoon to deliver a message to him, but had refused to say from whom it came. At last Colonel Burr's servant had traced the boy to the town residence of Celeste. Early next morning the message came; Celeste requested an interview. Post-haste the Vice-President hied to the presence of his beloved. He found her engaged with a visitor, but observed that she was agitated upon his entrance, and impatient for the departure of her guest. At length they were alone, and he waited for her to state her reasons for desiring to see him. With extreme embarrassment, she stammered out, after several vain attempts to speak, that she feared her note had not been couched in terms sufficiently polite, and she had therefore wished for an opportunity to apologize. She could utter no more. He, expecting no such matter, stared in dumb astonishment, with an absurd half-grin upon his countenance. As she sat deeply engaged in tearing to pieces some roses, and he in pinching new corners in the rim of his hat, she all blushes and confusion, he confounded and speechless, the pair, he afterward thought, would have made a capital subject for a painter. He was the first to recover power to articulate. Denying roundly that the fatal note was any thing but polite and proper, he offered to return it, proposed that it should be considered canceled, and begged to be allowed to call the next morning, and renew his suit. To this she objected, but faintly. Waiving his request for a formal permission, he changed the subject, and, after an hour's not unpleasant conversation, took his leave.

He now confessed to Theodosia, to whom the affair had been circumstantially related, from day to day, that he was in the condition of a certain country judge before whom a cause had been too ingeniously argued by the lawyers. "Gentlemen of the jury," said the judge, "you must get along with this cause as well as you can; for my part, I'm swamped." But the sapient Theodosia was not puzzled in the least. "She meant," wrote Theo., "from the beginning to say that awful word, *yes;* but not choosing to say it immediately, she told

you that *you* had furnished her with arguments against matrimony, which in French means, Please, sir, to persuade me out of them again. But you took it as a plump refusal, and walked off. She called you back. What more could she do? I would have seen you to Japan before I should have done so much."

However, the offer of marriage was never renewed. The lover was probably himself undecided as to the desirableness of the match. But between him and Celeste there was always a tender friendship, and for many months it seemed likely enough that at some unexpected moment the conclusive word would be spoken.

To complete his good fortune, he began his official life a very popular man. He was popular with his party for giving it victory. He was admired by vast numbers of honorable men, because he had disdained to seek his own elevation by defeating the will of a majority of his countrymen. The éclât of office was added to his reputation as a soldier and as a politician; and he, of all men, seemed to be the one most likely soon to have at his disposal the favors which a President can confer. There chanced to be in 1801, before the Vice-President had yet presided over the Senate, a convention in the State of New York to make certain amendments to the Constitution. Upon the meeting of the convention the Vice-President was made chairman by a unanimous vote.

Up to this time, Aaron Burr had known little but good fortune. He had been a successful soldier, a more successful lawyer, a most successful politician. Fortunate and happy in his domestic relations, he was strengthened now by the alliance of his daughter with an ancient and wealthy family. His own estate was ample and improving. His rival and enemy was distanced. Still in the very prime of his days, there was but one more honorable distinction for him to gain, and that seemed almost within his grasp. High in the esteem of his own party, he enjoyed also the general respect of the Federalists, as being a more moderate partisan than other leading Republicans.

Such was the position of Aaron Burr in the year 1801.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CLOUDS GATHER.

The Great Error of Burr's Public Life — Distribution of the Spoils — Cheetham and the American Citizen — Burr's Course on the Judiciary Bill — The Suppressed History of Adams's Administration — Hamilton's Morbid Apprehensions — Burr at the Washington Banquet — Hamilton's New Tactics — Cheetham's Calumnies — Their Refutation — The War of Pamphlets and Newspapers — Dueling then — Hamilton's Eldest Son Falls in a Duel — Duel between John Swartwout and De Witt Clinton — Robert Swartwout and Richard Riker's Duel — Duel between Coleman and Captain Thompson — Burr Runs for Governor of New York — The Contest — Burr Defeated.

But Fortune was now tired of befriending this man. His position was imposing, but hollow. As a politician, he never had any *real* basis; such as great ideas, strong convictions, important original measures, a grand policy; nor were his peculiar gifts of a nature to charm the multitude.

Aaron Burr should never have touched politics. He had no business with politics. Having made up his mind at old Dr. Bellamy's, that Honor was the god for a gentleman, and that Chesterfield was one of his prophets, he should have been content to practice law, get a fortune, shine in society, make the tour of Europe, patronize the fine arts, give elegant dinners; and so have been the inane and aimless individual that the rich American, since the Revolution, has usually plumed himself upon being. Or, he should have emigrated to France. In soldiers, Frenchmen, and children, ambition is a nearly inevitable incentive to exertion, and therefore pardonable. But for the citizen of a free State to seek or accept high public office for any smaller object than the public good, is not pardonable, but pitiable. The fatal day in the life of Aaron Burr was not on which he and his amiable foe *both* fell on the field of honor, never to rise, but on that on which he resolved, for party and personal reasons chiefly to turn politician.

Accursed be Politics for ever! The maëlstrom that has drawn in and engulfed so many able and worthy men. What talent it absorbs that is so needed elsewhere! How many fair reputations it has blasted! What toil, what ingenuity, what wealth, what lives have been wasted upon it! How mean are political methods and expedients, and how absurdly disproportioned are political triumphs to their cost! Politics can never be reformed. To abolish politics altogether is perhaps the atonement America is going, one day, to make to an outraged world, for sinking to the deepest deep, and wallowing in the filthiest filth of political turpitude.

Colonel Burr was now in several people's way, and measures were to be adopted to get him out of the way.

While a party is in opposition, any body who can help is welcome, and, if possible, rewarded. But when that party gets into power, and has all the great prizes to bestow; when a party nomination is equivalent to election; and when, above all, no man's help is felt to be *necessary;* the claims of the leading partizans are apt to be more closely scrutinized, and the force hitherto expended in securing triumph for the party, is devoted to gaining supremacy for the clique!

Colonel Burr was not the man that Thomas Jefferson and the Virginia politicians wanted to be the next democratic President. James Madison, then Secretary of State, and a man of immense family interest in Virginia, was the predestined candidate of the southern Republicans. Madison was Jefferson's neighbor, friend, and disciple. In New York, the Republican party, composed of three factions — Clintons, Livingstons, and Burrites — had been kept together by Colonel Burr's masterly management while there was a Federal party to be vanquished; but now that the victory was won, the elements of discord so long latent, burst into vigorous life. The Republican party of the State of New York was a unit no longer. Each of the three factions was jealous of the others, and aspired to sway the party. But, for the present, the Clintons and the Livingstons were disposed to unite their forces for the purpose of destroying Burr and his band of followers. Thus against our hero and his "myrmidons," three great pow-

ers were soon to be secretly or openly leagued; namely, first, the Virginia politicians, one of whom wielded the patronage of the Federal government; secondly, the Clintons, one of whom was Governor of the State of New York, while young De Witt Clinton was a member of the United States Senate; and, lastly, the numerous and wealthy family of the Livingstons. Each of these had darling objects, to the attainment of which Colonel Burr's present commanding position and peculiar powers were the chief obstacle.

Down with the interloper, was now the whisper that circulated among the magnates of the party, both at Washington and at Albany

In the distribution of the "spoils" of victory, many important friends of Colonel Burr were passed by, while the members and adherents of the two great families were loaded with favor. Edward Livingston was appointed mayor of the city, Chancellor Livingston went embassador to France. Brockholst Livingston and Smith Thompson, whose wife was a Livingston, were elevated to the bench of the State Supreme Court. Morgan Lewis, Dr. Tillotson, and General Armstrong, all connected by marriage with the same family, were well provided for. George Clinton was governor, De Witt Clinton was in the Senate. A large proportion of the minor city offices were given to Clintonians. The Federal offices, too, were bestowed in accordance with the same general plan of excluding the friends of Burr. Soon, Colonel Burr and John Swartwout, through Clintonian influence, lost their seats, after a hotly-contested election, as directors of the Manhattan Bank; and the influence and power of that institution were used against the man to whom it owed its existence.

It soon became apparent that the *American Citizen*, the organ of the Republican party in the city, owned by a cousin of De Witt Clinton's, was conducted wholly in the interest of that politician. It was edited by a scurrilous dog of an Englishman, named Cheetham, who began life as a hatter, and who knew as much of American politics as De Witt Clinton chose to tell him. This Cheetham fancied he had a talent for invective, and, nothing pleased him better than to make a

set-attack on some public character, in what he supposed to be the manner of Junius. Hamilton, too, had an organ, the newly-established *Evening Post*, edited by William Coleman, a lawyer, a good writer, and a gentleman.

In these circumstances, the friends of Burr, in the summer of 1802, assisted to establish the *Morning Chronicle*, which supported the administration, but was especially friendly to the Vice-President. This *Morning Chronicle* ceased, long ago, to exist, but its name, through a happy accident, will be remembered for many generations to come. It was edited by Dr. Peter Irving, and, in its columns, a younger brother of the editor, WASHINGTON IRVING, first appeared as a writer for the public. Mr. Irving was a youth of nineteen when Colonel Burr used to cut out his *Jonathan Oldstyle* essays from the *Chronicle*, and inclose them in his letters to Theodosia, with the remark that they were very good for so young a man. He was fortunate in having such a contributor. But Burr needed a fighting newspaper. Dr. Irving, in contending with such a fellow as Cheetham, labored under the crushing disadvantage of being a gentleman and a scholar.

Thus the weapons of warfare were prepared. Colonel Burr soon gave dog Cheetham an opportunity to howl the alarm.

On his way to the seat of government, in the autumn of 1801, to take his seat in the chair of the Senate, the Vice-President received from certain citizens of Baltimore one of those adulatory addresses of which Mr. Adams was so fond, and which it had been a specialty of the Republican party to denounce and ridicule. To this address Colonel Burr responded thus: "Time will not allow me to return a written answer, but I must be permitted to state my disapprobation of the mode of expressing public sentiment by addresses." This answer was in the strictest accordance with the Republican feeling of the time. But it was needlessly abrupt, and gave offense to many. It savored of Federal haughtiness, thought some, and was unbecoming a public servant. But this was a trifle.

The great measure of the session was the repeal of a judiciary bill, which passed at the close of the last Congress, by

which the number of Federal judges was increased by twenty-three. This bill had been passed by a party vote, the Republicans going against it in a body. But what made it inexpressibly odious to the new administration, and to the Republican party, was the indecent haste with which Mr. Adams, in the very last hour of his presidency, had appointed the new judges. These were the "midnight appointments" of which Mr. Jefferson so wrathfully spoke in a letter previously quoted, and which were the more offensive as the judges were appointed for life. What President, what party, could see, without disgust, twenty-three keenly-coveted life-judgeships, stolen, as it were, from the hard-won "spoils" of victory? Twenty-three such offices, skillfully bestowed, were a reserve of political capital that would suffice, alone, to turn the scale in a close contest, whether in caucus or at the polls. Enough. The party was resolved on repealing the bill, and thus annihilating the judgeships which it created. This was done, but only after a long period of exciting and acrimonious debate, during which the Vice-President, by the utter impartiality of his conduct, gave offense to both parties.

The Senate was nearly *tied* on the question, and thus it happened that at a certain stage of the bill the Vice-President had to give a casting vote. On a motion to refer the bill to a committee for amendment, the vote was fourteen to fourteen, the Federalists favoring the reference. The Vice-President said:

"I am for the affirmative, because I never can resist the reference of a measure where the Senate is so nicely balanced, and when the object is to effect amendment that may accommodate it to the opinions of a large majority, and particularly when I can believe that gentlemen are sincere in wishing a reference for this purpose. Should it, however, at any time appear that delay only is intended, my conduct will be different."

This vote produced a "sensation." The ultra Republicans condemned it, of course; and Cheetham made it the object of vituperation. The ultra Federalists rejoiced over it. Moderate men of all parties saw in it the simple discharge of an

obvious duty. As it happened, however, the vote had no results, for the arrival of a Senator, a day or two after, restored the Republican majority, and the bill was taken out of committee forthwith.

At other stages of the bill, the Vice-President's course was severely disappointing to the Federalists. On this point we have the unequaled authority of Gouveneur Morris, who, as a Federal Senator, fought for the preservation of the judgeships with all the energy of honest and disinterested conviction. He believed the nation would be disgraced by depriving men of offices which the Constitution gave them for life, and which they had accepted on that condition. Gouveneur Morris, when all was over, wrote thus to his friend, Chancellor Livingston: "There was a moment when the Vice-President might have arrested the measure by his vote, and that vote would, I believe, have made him President at the next election; but 'there is a tide in the affairs of men,' which he suffered to go by."

This reserve of power on the part of Colonel Burr was the more creditable to him from the fact that he was rather opposed to the repeal than otherwise. It is evident from his correspondence at the time, that he made the *legality* of the repeal a special subject of investigation, and, according to his wont, of consultation with the eminent lawyers of his acquaintance. To Barnabas Bidwell, he writes: "The *power* thus to deprive judges of their offices and salaries must be admitted; but whether it would be *constitutionally moral*, if I may use the expression, and, if so, whether it would be *politic* and expedient, are questions on which I could wish to be further advised. Your opinion on these points would be particularly acceptable."

To his son-in-law he expresses the same doubts, and adds "Read the Constitution, and having informed yourself of the out-of-door talk, write me how you view the thing." Mr. A. J. Dallas of Pennsylvania, a zealous and able Democrat, gave the Vice-President a decided opinion against the repeal of the bill, and in favor of amending it. Jefferson, it appears, took about the same view of the repeal as Burr, and, as the Vice-

President forbore to defeat it by his casting vote, the President refrained from killing it by his veto.

Before Cheetham had done ringing the changes on the Vice-President's alleged inconsistency on the judiciary bill, Colonel Burr gave him another subject upon which to exercise his talents.

A certain John Wood, of New York, toward the close of the year 1801, sent to press a voluminous pamphlet, entitled, "A History of the Administration of John Adams." Stupidity, Ignorance, and Falsehood combined their several powers in the production of this indigested mass of tedious lies. It was a sort of "campaign life" reversed; that is, instead of being all puff, it was all slander or misrepresentation. One sentence from this precious work will suffice to give the reader an idea of its character, and of the *good* it was likely to do to the Republican cause. After berating John Adams for many a weary page, Mr. Wood proceeded to inquire why it was that Connecticut should have been so persistent and unanimous in support of such a madman. This, he says, naturally excites our wonder and astonishment. "But the surprise of the reader will vanish when he is informed that in no part of the world the bigotry of priesthood reigns so triumphant, and that the dark shades of superstition nowhere cloud the understanding of man in such a degree, as among the unhappy natives of Connecticut."

The volume contained labored eulogies of Jefferson and Burr. The puff of the Vice-President concluded with these words: "It is impossible to draw a character of Colonel Burr in more applicable and expressive terms than Governor Livingston has done of his father: 'Though a person of a slender and delicate make, to encounter fatigue he has a heart of steel; and for the dispatch of business, the most amazing talents joined to a constancy of mind that insures success in spite of every obstacle. As long as an enterprise appears not absolutely impossible, he knows no discouragement, but, in proportion to its difficulty, augments his diligence; and by an insuperable fortitude, frequently accomplishes what his friends and acquaintances conceived utterly impracticable.'"

Colonel Burr read this work in the sheets. He saw at one glance that its publication would do the Republican party harm instead of good; particularly in New England, where he was most of all solicitous to gain adherents. He began, by this time, to understand that his future, as a politician, depended upon the Republican party's gaining such an increase of strength in New England as to counterbalance the undue influence of Virginia. With his usual promptness, but not with his usual completeness of success, he attempted to suppress the book. Twelve hundred and fifty copies had been printed. He agreed with author and publisher to pay a certain sum, on condition that the whole edition should be burned and the secret kept. Before the bargain was consummated, however, it was ascertained that information of the negotiation had been given to Duane, of the Philadelphia *Aurora*, and to our Cheetham, of the New York *Citizen*, and that certain copies had been handed about. As one of the publishers of the book had been tutor in General Hamilton's family, it may be that in this affair Hamilton repaid Burr, in kind, for his maneuvers in 1800.* Be that as it may, Burr refused to pay for the edition, and let the matter take its course.

Cheetham, first by hints and innuendoes, then by broad and reiterated assertion, assailed the Vice-President, maintaining that he had attempted to suppress the book *for the sake of shielding his new friends, the Federalists*, from the just odium which its general circulation would have excited. Here was another proof, said Cheetham, if other proof were needed, of the faithlessness of the Vice-President to his party, etc., etc. Duane, of the more decent *Aurora*, joined at last in the cry, though, at the time, he had approved of the suppression, as a letter of his to Colonel Burr still shows. His letter, dated April 15, says it was *fortunate* Wood's pamphlet had not appeared, and it would be still more fortunate if it should never appear. His paper of July 12th expresses the opinion that if the motives for the suppression of the book were not satisfac-

* Hamilton had no objection to a publication which tended to justify his own opposition to Adams. When, soon after, Wood got into prison for debt, he was released by Coleman, the editor of Hamilton's organ.

torily explained to the public, Colonel Burr's standing with the Republican interest was gone.

No explanation at all was vouchsafed to a credulous public. Burr was careless of public opinion to a remarkable degree, and he was full of that pride, so common in his day, which disdains to notice newspaper comment, or any other form of popular clamor. One of the maxims which he used to recommend to his protegés was, never to apologize for or explain away a public action which might be disapproved, but let its results speak. Once, after reproving his daughter for some slight neglect, he adds, "No apologies or explanations — I hate them." Alluding to one of Cheetham's lies, he wrote to Theodosia: "They are so utterly lost on me that I should never have seen even this, but that it came inclosed to me in a letter from New York." In another letter he speaks of "some new and amusing libels against the Vice-President," which he had thought of sending her. This is, doubtless, the right temper for a man who has no favors to ask of the public; but to one whose career in life absolutely depends upon the multitude's sweet voices, it will certainly, sooner or later, prove fatal. Besides, it was only this summer that Dr. Irving had got his *Morning Chronicle* fairly under way, and by that time Cheetham's calumnies had struck in past eradication.

But these were only preliminary scandals. The main attack was to come. Before proceeding to that, however, let us see what new gorgons the Vice-President's conduct was conjuring up in the morbid mind of Hamilton.

The celebration of Washington's birth-day was then more a party than a national custom, and one which the Federalists were not likely to neglect in the first year of a Republican administration. The usual banquet was held at Washington. A few days after, the rumor circulated in New York that the Vice-President had actually been present at that festival, and given a toast. "We are told here," wrote Hamilton to Bayard, "that at the close of your birth-day feast, a strange *apparition*, which was taken for the Vice-President, appeared among you, and toasted 'the union of all honest men.' I often hear at the corner of the streets important Federal se-

crets of which I am ignorant. This may be one. If the story is true, 'tis a good thing if we use it well. As an *instrument*, the person will be an auxiliary of *some* value; as a chief, he will disgrace and destroy the party. I suspect, however, the folly of the mass will make him the latter, and from the moment it shall appear that this is the plan, it may be depended upon, much more will be lost than gained. I know of no important character who has a less *founded* interest than the man in question. His talents may do well enough for a particular plot, but they are ill-suited for a great and wise drama. But what has wisdom to do with weak men?"

That remark about Burr's talents being better adapted to a particular plot, than to a "great and wise drama," is one of the truest ever made by Hamilton of his antagonist.

To Gouveneur Morris, Hamilton writes in a similar strain. He fears that some *new* intrigue is hatching between Burr and the Federalists. If not, what meant the "apparition?" He adds, that if Burr should form a third party, "we may think it worth while *to purchase him with his flying squadrons.*" Hamilton's main idea was: Let us use Burr as a means of *our* elevation, not let him use *us* as a means of his own.

It was again the sensible Mr. Bayard's privilege to allay Hamilton's apprehensions. In reply to the latter's "apparition" letter, he wrote as follows: "The apprehensions you appear to entertain of the effect of the intrigues of a certain person, if you will take my word for it, are wholly without ground. In fact, little has been attempted and nothing accomplished. I answer only for the time present, because I believe the gentleman is waiting to see the result of the new state of things more completely developed before he decides upon the course he will pursue. The *apparition* in the *after-piece* was not unexpected, but the toast was.

"An intimation was given that, if he was sensible of no impropriety in being our guest upon the occasion, his company would be very acceptable; our calculation was that he had less chance of gaining than losing by accepting the invitation. We knew *the impression which the coincidence of circumstances would make on a certain great personage*, how

readily that impression would be communicated to the proud and aspiring lords of the ancient dominion, and we have not been mistaken as to the jealousy we expected it would excite through the party.

"Be assured, the apparition was much less frightful to those who saw it than to many who heard of the place where it appeared. The toast was indiscreet, and extremely well calculated to answer our views. It will not be an easy task to impose upon the Federalists here, united and communicative as they are at present; and you may rely, that no eagerness to recover lost power will betray them into any doctrines or compromises repugnant or dangerous to their former principles. We shall probably pay more attention to public opinion than we have hitherto done, and take more pains not merely to do right things, but to do them in an acceptable manner."

That such a pother should arise from a Vice-President of the United States attending a banquet in honor of George Washington, gives the modern reader an idea of the reality of the political differences of that day, which we can the better understand from the fact, that such differences are again becoming real. Colonel Burr had a reason for attending this banquet of a personal kind. The Federal members of the House who gave the banquet, and who invited the Vice-President to attend it, were the very men who, a year ago, had sat a week trying to make him President. Who was the *intriguer* in this business, Bayard or Burr?

Hamilton's rejoinder to Bayard, is one of the most characteristic epistles he ever wrote. It is eminently amiable and absurd. He says that Bayard's explanation has allayed his fear. He then proceeds to divulge an elaborate plan for bringing the country back again to its former Federal principles. We must change our tactics, he begins. We have relied too much upon the mere excellence of our measures. Men are reasoning, but not reasonable creatures. While we have appealed solely to the reason, our opponents have flattered the vanity of the people, and the consequence is we are prostrate, and they are triumphant. We must be more *politic*, my dear sir. Nothing wrong must be done, of course; but we must

meet art with art, and defeat trick with trick; that is, as far as we can do so innocently. After a prologue of this description, comes the play. He suggests the formation of a "Christian Constitutional Society," with a president and council of twelve at Washington, a vice-president and sub-council of twelve in each State, and as many local branches as may be necessary. The object of this grand association was to be, ostensibly, first, the support of the Christian religion; secondly, the support of the Constitution of the United States. The *real* object, of course, was to turn out the vulgar, odious "Jacobins," and raise to power once more the virtuous and polite Federalists. This was to be done by diffusing information, by getting good men elected to office, and by promoting charitable institutions, particularly in cities. As a proof how much the cities needed looking after, Hamilton revives the story of the *plot* which was said to have been formed, during the presidential suspense of 1801, to seize and "cut off" the leading Federalists.

This reads very much like imbecility. One would have supposed the Federalists had had enough of secret societies, in their early experiences with regard to the Cincinnati. And how Hamilton had denounced the American imitations of the French Jacobin clubs! Bayard set him right once more, by telling him decidedly that his Club scheme would not do. Let us wait, said Bayard, and the enemy will soon show the country that we are the party to give it prosperity.

The country, meanwhile, was obstinately prosperous, and unreasonably peaceful, and madly confident of the ability and patriotism of the administration. But there was a gleam of hope for the Federalists still. In the summer of 1802, a rumor was flying about among them that there was division in the enemy's camp; the President and Vice-President had quarreled! In June, Hamilton writes a doleful letter to Rufus King about affairs political, which thus concludes:

"There is, however, a circumstance which may accelerate the fall of the present party. There is certainly a most serious schism between the chief and his heir-apparent; a schism absolutely incurable, because founded in the hearts of both, in

the rivalship of an insatiable and unprincipled ambition. The effects are already apparent, and are ripening into a more bitter animosity between the partizans of the two men than ever existed between the Federalists and anti-Federalists.

"Unluckily, we are not as neutral to this quarrel as we ought to be. You saw, however, how far our friends in Congress went in polluting themselves with the support of the second personage for the presidency. The cabal did not terminate there. Several men, of no inconsiderable importance among us, like the enterprising and adventurous character of this man, and hope to soar with him into power. Many more, through hatred to the chief, and through an impatience to recover the reins, are linking themselves to the new chief almost without perceiving it, and professing to have no other object than to make use of him; while he knows that he is making use of them. What this may end in, it is difficult to perceive."

The truth about all this is now sufficiently apparent. The President and Vice-President were on about the same terms as before. Colonel Burr dined at the White House twice a month, and with the members of the cabinet about once a year. Between himself and Mr. Madison there was an appearance of friendliness, and a growing reality of reserve. Theodosia and the beautiful Mrs. Madison seem to have been on terms of considerable intimacy. But Jefferson, partly for personal, chiefly for patriotic reasons, wished the Virginia politicians to continue the democratic rule. It was apparent to Burr that their political projects were incompatible, and he began to look, more and more, to the northern States for support, knowing that nothing but the impossibility of carrying an election without him would secure him the support of the Virginians. The two chiefs were, therefore, at cross purposes, so far as party management was concerned; and there is no question that Jefferson now felt that repugnance to Burr which their uncongenial natures must, in almost any circumstances, have generated. But they never quarreled. Down to Burr's last visit to Philadelphia, in 1806, he called on and dined with the President quite as usual. Burr, it must be

remembered, could not be, like Madison or Monroe, a satellite. His aim was to be an independent power in politics.

To return to Cheetham. Continuing his attack on the Vice-President, he brought out his most damaging accusation, which was, that Colonel Burr, during the tie period, had intrigued for electoral votes, with the design to defraud Jefferson of the presidency. The charge was made with staggering positiveness, and desperate pertinacity. This scandal was Cheetham's master-piece, and the public mind by his previous efforts, though not convinced, had become prepared to receive it. The better to effect his purpose, he wrote a series of "Nine Letters," in which he professed to give a history of Colonel Burr's political life, but every page of which showed the man's ignorance of the subject upon which he was writing. These letters were afterward published in a pamphlet, which became, for awhile, the town-talk, and had a considerable circulation at all the political centers.

For the purpose of showing the caliber and style of Cheetham, and his slight acquaintance with the political history of the times, I will copy a passage from his fifth epistle, which is in his very best *Junius* style. It contains just that mixture of truth and falsehood which marks the productions of unscrupulous scribes, who are hired to clothe with words the ideas of their masters. Cheetham was a boy of seventeen when Colonel Burr began his political life. He was just of age when Burr went to the Senate, and was never in a position to have any personal knowledge of interior politics.

Thus Cheetham, in his fifth epistle: "Your activity," said this Junius Americanus, addressing the Vice-President, "was uniformly apportioned to your selfishness. You were never active but when you had personal favors to expect. At the election for governor, in 1792, after the Federalists refused to accept you as their candidate, you were not to be seen, and scarcely to be heard of. In 1795, when the Republicans made choice of Judge Yates in preference to yourself, you retired in dudgeon, and neither moved your lips nor lifted your pen in favor of his election. In 1796, you rendered no assistance to the Republicans at the election for Assembly-men. In 1797,

you manifested some concern for, and contributed your mite to the success of, the Republican ticket; but let it be remembered that you were that year a candidate for the Assembly! In 1798, the darkest period the Union has seen since the Revolution, you neither appeared at the Republican meetings nor at the polls, you neither planned in the cabinet nor acted in the field. If you were then eloquent, it was the eloquence of the grave. At that portentous period, when the greatest exertions were made necessary, you manifested none. In 1799 you were still in your shell; you were neither seen at the Ward assemblies nor on the election ground. But in 1800 you were all activity and zeal. Every ligament of your frame was brought into action. You devoted night and day to the success of the Republican ticket. You attended all our meetings, and harangued the assembled citizens at most. You even stood at the polls and challenged voters. All this was admired, since, without looking at the motive, it was serviceable. We give you full credit for your zeal and activity on the occasion, especially as it was the *first time* you exhibited either. But even here you were the same man. You were *peculiarly* interested in the success of the election. You knew that you would be a candidate for the Vice-Presidency, and you, with the country at large, were of opinion that the success of the presidential election depended principally on our triumph in that of our city. You had made nice calculations on this subject, and very clearly foresaw the necessity for herculean exertions. Accordingly, you were all animation. You were first at the meeting, first at the polls. While our citizens applauded your conduct, they were ignorant of your motives; they knew little of your real character; it had been carefully enveloped in mystery. Like theirs, they fondly imagined that *your* zeal and industry were the effect of pure and disinterested patriotism. Alas! sir, they knew you not."

And so on, from the beginning to the end of the nine letters.

Cheetham's main charge may be divided into two counts; first, that Colonel Burr intrigued for Federal votes; secondly, that he intrigued for Republican votes. Than the first count,

no accusation made against a politician was ever so slenderly supported by evidence, or refuted by evidence so various, so unequivocal, so lavishly superfluous in quantity. In the course of the discussion which arose, every person who *could* have been concerned in the alleged intrigue — Burr's intimate friends, the leading Federalists, members of the House who held optional votes — denied in terms positive and unequivocal, in the public press and over their own signatures, that they had either taken part in, or had any knowledge of, any intrigue or bargain between Colonel Burr and the Federalists, or between the friends of Colonel Burr and the Federalists, during the period referred to, or at any time preceding it.

David A. Ogden was accused of having been an agent of the negotiation. In the *Morning Chronicle* of November 25th, 1802, Mr. Ogden said: "When about to return from the city of Washington, two or three members of Congress, of the Federal party, spoke to me about their views as to the election of President, desiring me to converse with Colonel Burr on the subject, and to ascertain whether he would enter into terms. On my return to New York I called on Colonel Burr, and communicated the above to him. He explicitly declined the explanation, and did neither propose nor agree to any terms. I had no other interview or communication with him on the subject; and so little was I satisfied with this, that in a letter which I soon afterward wrote to a member of Congress, and which was the only one I wrote, I dissuaded him from giving his support to Colonel Burr, and advised rather to acquiesce in the election of Mr. Jefferson, as the less dangerous man of the two."

Edward Livingston, John Swartwout, William P. Van Ness, Matthew L. Davis, and others, declared the innocence of Burr in language equally explicit. Hamilton himself publicly avowed, in the *Evening Post*, that he had no personal knowledge of, or belief in, the existence of any negotiations between Colonel Burr and the members of the Federal party.

Mr. Bayard of Delaware, who had been in a position to know more of the tie affair than any other man, and who had finally given the election to Jefferson, re-stated all that had

occurred in the most minute and circumstantial manner, in a formal affidavit. "I took pains," said Mr. Bayard, "to disclose the state of things (in the Federal caucus) in such a manner that it might be known to the friends of Mr. Burr, and to those gentlemen who were believed to be most disposed to change their votes in his favor. I repeatedly stated to many gentlemen with whom I was acting, that it was a vain thing to protract the election, as it had become manifest that Mr. Burr would not assist us, and as we could do nothing without his aid. I expected, under those circumstances, if there was any latent engines at work in Mr. Burr's favor, the plan of operations would be disclosed to me; but, although I had the power, and threatened to terminate the election, I had not even an intimation from any friend of Mr. Burr's that it would be desirable to them to protract it. I never did discover that Mr. Burr used the least influence to promote the object we had in view. And being completely persuaded that Mr. Burr would not coöperate with us, I determined to end the contest by voting for Mr. Jefferson. * * * I have no reason to believe, and never did think that he interfered, even to the point of personal influence, to obstruct the election of Mr. Jefferson or to promote his own."

On another occasion, Mr. Bayard deposed: "Early in the election it was reported that Mr. Edward Livingston, the representative of the city of New York, was the confidential agent for Mr. Burr, and that Mr. Burr had committed himself entirely to the discretion of Mr. Livingston, having agreed to adopt all his acts. I took an occasion to sound Mr. Livingston on the subject, and intimated that, having it my power to terminate the contest, I should do so, unless he could give me some assurance that we might calculate upon a change in the votes of some of the members of his party. Mr. Livingston stated that he felt no great concern as to the event of the election, but he disclaimed any agency from Mr. Burr, or any connection with him on the subject, and any knowledge of Mr. Burr's designing to coöperate in support of his election."

This volume would not contain the printed matter which Cheetham's accusation called forth. Mr. Van Ness wrote a

vigorous, nay a *savage*, pamphlet in reply to Cheetham, which added fuel to the flames of passion, but, probably, effected little else. To argument, to solemn deposition, to circumstantial affidavit, Cheetham's too effectual response was an endless reiteration of the charge. For awhile, Colonel Burr maintained his usual silence. Late in September, when the mean contest had been waging for several weeks, he was induced to write a brief denial in a letter to his friend, Governor Bloomfield of New Jersey. "You are at liberty," he said, "to declare from me that all those charges and insinuations which aver or intimate that I advised or countenanced the opposition made to Mr. Jefferson pending the late election and balloting for President; that I proposed or agreed to any terms with the Federal party; that I assented to be held up in opposition to him, or attempted to withdraw from him the vote or support of any man, whether in or out of Congress; that all such assertions and intimations are false and groundless."

With regard to Cheetham's second count, namely, that Burr intrigued for *Republican* votes, a few words must be added. It is equally unsupported by evidence. It is, I am convinced, equally false. General Smith, of Maryland, who was Burr's proxy in the House, declared in the *Evening Post*, while the controversy was in full tide:

"Mr. Burr never visited me on the subject of the late election for President and Vice-President — Mr. Burr never conversed with me a single second on the subject of that election, either before or since the event."

That Burr himself was passive — that he observed rigorously the morality and the etiquette of a situation novel and bewildering, is a fact which became apparent to me by reading the writings of his enemies, and will become apparent to any candid person who will take the same trouble. But it is true that John Swartwout, General Van Ness, and others of Burr's sect, most ardently desired the elevation of their chief to the presidency. It is true that they believed he ought to be elected, rather than have no President. It is true, as John Swartwout, with his usual frankness publicly avowed, that

they thought it would not have been in the least dishonorable, if they *had* promoted and secured his election. It is *probably* true, that, after several fruitless ballotings had spread abroad the impression that Jefferson could not be elected, both Swartwout and Van Ness wrote letters to Republican members of the House, urging them to give up Jefferson and elect Burr. Of this they were so far from being ashamed, that they gave permission to all their correspondents to publish any letters of theirs on public subjects, which had been written during the time it was alleged the intrigue had occurred.

Readers who have reached the prime of life, can look back to the time when John Quincy Adams was elected President by the House of Representatives, through the casting vote of Henry Clay, who was immediately appointed Secretary of State by the new President. They can remember how, during the next four years, the opposition press rang with the charge of "bargain and corruption." That charge, mean, and groundless as it was, turned one of the two men out of the presidency, and *kept* out the other, through twenty years of such popularity as no other partisan has ever enjoyed with the enlightened portion of the American people. From that, we of this generation may form an idea of the effect which Cheetham's accusation, taken up by other papers and ceaselessly repeated, had upon the political fortunes of Aaron Burr. He had not the wealth of popularity to draw upon which gathered round Henry Clay's magnificent form and generous, gallant heart; and if Clay's electric name was not proof against base and baseless scandal, is it wonderful that the luster of Burr's not untarnished fame should have been diminished by it beyond remedy?

Bitter and deadly, beyond what the modern reader can imagine, were the political controversies of that period. The law of the pistol was in full force. In 1801, Hamilton's eldest son, a high-spirited youth of twenty, fell in a duel which arose from a political dispute at the theater. "He was murdered in a duel," said Coleman, of the *Evening Post*, who that very month had threatened Cheetham with a challenge, and who,

the next day spoke of "the insolent vulgarity of that base wretch."*

The duel between John Swartwout and De Witt Clinton, which occurred amid the heat and violence of 1802, was the most remarkable conflict of the kind which has ever occurred, this side of the Emerald Isle. Clinton was a strong-headed and bitter-tongued politician. Swartwout was a frank-hearted, brave man, devoted to Burr with a disinterested enthusiasm, that stood all the tests to which friendship can ever be subjected. He saw with furious disgust the efforts of De Witt Clinton's creatures to blacken Burr's reputation, and had himself experienced the effects of his hostility. Clinton hearing that Swartwout had accused him of opposing Burr on grounds personal and selfish, called him "a liar, a scoundrel, and a villain." This was reported to Swartwout, and a duel was the result.

What occurred at the ground at Weehawken, was stated in the newspapers of the day by Colonel Smith, Swartwout's second: "The gentlemen took their stations — were each presented with a pistol, and, by order, faced to the right, and fired, ineffectually. At the request of Mr. Riker, I asked Mr. Swartwout, 'Are you satisfied, sir?' He answered, 'I am not.' The pistols then being exchanged, and their positions resumed, by order, the gentlemen faced to the right, and fired a second shot, without effect. At the request of Mr. Riker, I again addressed Mr. Swartwout, 'Are you satisfied, sir?' He answered strongly in the negative, we proceeded, and a third shot was exchanged, without injury. At the request of Mr. Riker, I again asked Mr. Swartwout, 'Are you satisfied, sir?' He answered, 'I am not — neither shall I be, until that apology is made which I have demanded. Until then we must proceed.' I then presented a paper to Mr. Riker, containing

* The following epigram appeared in the *Evening Post*, a little later:

"Lie on Duane, lie on for pay,
And Cheetham, lie thou too;
More against truth you can not say,
Than truth can say 'gainst you."

the apology demanded, for Mr. Clinton's signature, observing, that we could not spend our time in conversation; that this paper must be signed or proceed. Mr. Clinton declared he would not sign any paper on the subject — that he had no animosity against Mr. Swartwout — would willingly shake hands and agree to meet on the score of former friendship.

"Mr. Swartwout insisting on his signature to the apology, and Mr. Clinton declining, they stood at their posts and fired a fourth shot. Mr. Clinton's ball struck Mr. Swartwout's left leg, about five inches below the knee; — he stood ready and collected. At the request of Mr. Riker, I again addressed Mr. Swartwout, 'Are you satisfied, sir?' He answered, that 'It was useless to repeat the question — my determination is fixed — and I beg we may proceed.' Mr. Clinton repeated that he had no animosity against Mr. Swartwout — was sorry for what had passed — proposed to advance, shake hands, and bury the circumstance in oblivion. During this conversation, Mr. Swartwout's surgeon, kneeling by his side, extracted the ball from the opposite side of his leg. Mr. Swartwout standing erect on his post, and positively declining any thing short of an ample apology, they fired the fifth shot, and Mr. Swartwout received the ball in the left leg, about five inches above the ancle; still, however, standing steadily at his post, perfectly composed. At the request of Mr. Riker, I again addressed Mr. Swartwout, 'Are you satisfied, sir?' He forcibly answered, 'I am not, sir; proceed.' Mr. Clinton then quit his station, declined the combat, and declared he would fire no more. Mr. Swartwout declared himself surprised, that Mr. Clinton would neither apologize nor give him the satisfaction required; and addressing me, said, 'What shall I do, my friend?' I answered, 'Mr Clinton declines making the apology required — refuses taking his position — and positively declares he will fight no more; and his second appearing to acquiesce in the disposition of his principal, there is nothing further left for you *now*, but to have your wounds dressed.' The surgeons attended, dressed Mr. Swartwout's wounds, and the gentlemen in their respective barges, returned to the city."

An *on dit* of the day was, that Clinton said, during the progress of the duel, "I wish I had the *principal* here," referring to Colonel Burr.

The next year, De Witt Clinton was challenged by Senator Jonathan Dayton, of New Jersey, another of Burr's intimates, but the affair was peacefully arranged. The year following, Robert Swartwout fought with Richard Riker, a zealous Clintonian, who had served as second to Clinton in his duel with John Swartwout. In this duel, Riker was severely wounded, but he recovered to sit for many years on the Recorder's bench in the city of New York. The same year, Coleman of the *Evening Post*, provoked beyond endurance by an attack of surpassing malignancy in the *American Citizen*, forgot himself so far as to challenge Cheetham. But the cur could not be brought to bay. "Friends interfered," a truce was patched up, and Cheetham agreed to behave better in future.

Out of this affair, however, another quarrel grew, which led to one of the most diabolical duels ever fought. Captain Thompson, harbor-master of New York, loudly espoused Cheetham's cause, and gave out that it was Coleman, not Cheetham, that had showed the white feather. Coleman heard of it, and challenged him. The twilight of a winter's evening found the parties arrayed against each other in lonely "Love-lane," now called "Twenty-first-street." It was cold, there was snow on the ground, and it was nearly dark. A shot or two was exchanged without effect, and then the principals were placed nearer together, that they might see one another better. At length Thompson was heard to cry, "I've got it," and fell headlong on the snow. Coleman and his second hurried away, while the surgeon raised the bleeding man, examined his wound, and saw that it was mortal. On learning his fate, Thompson, at the surgeon's suggestion, promised never to divulge the names of the parties, and, with a heroism worthy of a better cause, he kept his word. "He was brought, mortally wounded, to his sister's house in town: he was laid at the door, the bell was rung, the family came out, and found him bleeding and near his death. He refused to name his

antagonist, or give any account of the affair, declaring that every thing which had been done was honorably done, and desired that no attempt should be made to seek out or molest his adversary."*

To such lengths can political fury drive men of honor, education and humanity. Let us hasten past these deplorable scenes.

Three years of Colonel Burr's Vice-Presidency passed in these contentions. They told upon his popularity. As the time for selecting candidates for the presidential campaign drew on, it became manifest that he could not secure the undivided support of the Republican party for a second term. His career was interrupted. He must pause a while. By some other, and longer, and more circuitous path he must continue his ascent to that top-most, dazzling height, which has lured so many Americans to falseness of life and meanness of aim. The course which he pursued, in these circumstances, was precisely what fidelity to his party would have dictated.

Toward the close of January, 1804, he requested a private interview with the President. On the designated evening, the two chiefs met, and had a long conversation. The account which Mr. Jefferson left of this interview is doubtless, in the main particulars, correct, but some of the minor circumstances are evidently colored by his natural dislike of a man who, he thought, had been his rival without being his equal. No man *can* write quite fairly of one whom he hates, despises, or fears.

Colonel Burr began the conversation by sketching his political career in New York, dwelling particularly on the late crusade against him. He proceeded to say, among other things, that his attachment to Mr. Jefferson had been sincere, and that he had keenly enjoyed his company and conversation. His feelings had undergone no change, although "many little stories" had been carried to him, and, he supposed, to Mr. Jefferson also, which he despised. But attachment must be reciprocal or cease to exist, and therefore he desired to know whether any change had taken place in the feelings of Mr.

* "Reminiscences of the *Evening Post*." By W. C. Bryant.

Jefferson toward himself. "He reminded me," says Jefferson, "of a letter written to him about the time of counting the votes, mentioning that his election had left a chasm in my arrangements; that I had lost him from my list in the administration, etc. He observed, he believed it would be for the interest of the Republican cause for him to retire; that a disadvantageous schism would otherwise take place; but that were he to retire, it would be said he shrunk from the public sentence, which he would never do; that his enemies were using my name to destroy him, and something was necessary from me to prevent and deprive them of that weapon, some mark of favor from me which would declare to the world that he retired with my confidence."

The President replied at great length. Waiving Burr's inquiry respecting his personal feelings, he said, that, as he had not interfered in the election of 1800, so he was resolved not to influence the one which was then impending. He did not know who were to be candidates, and never permitted any one to converse with him on the subject. With regard to the attacks which the press had made upon the Vice-President, he had noticed them but as the passing wind. He had seen complaints that Cheetham, employed in publishing the laws, should be permitted to eat the public bread, and abuse its second officer. But the laws were published in some papers which abused the President continually, and, as he had never thought proper to interfere for himself, he had not deemed it his duty to do so in the case of the Vice-President.

"I now," continues Mr. Jefferson, "went on to explain to him verbally what I meant by saying I had lost him from my list. That in General Washington's time, it had been signified to him that Mr. Adams, the Vice-President, would be glad of a foreign embassy; that General Washington mentioned it to me, expressed his doubts whether Mr. Adams was a fit character for such an office, and his still greater doubts, indeed, his conviction, that it would not be justifiable to send away the person who, in case of his death, was provided by the Constitution to take his place; that it would, moreover, appear indecent for him to be disposing of the public trusts in ap-

parently buying off a competitor for the public favor. I concurred with him in the opinion, and if I recollect rightly, Hamilton, Knox, and Randolph were consulted, and gave the same opinions. That when Mr. Adams came to the administration, in his first interview with me, he mentioned the necessity of a mission to France, and how desirable it would have been for him if he could have got me to undertake it; but that he conceived it would be wrong in him to send me away, and assigned the same reasons General Washington had done; and, therefore, he should appoint Mr. Madison, etc. That I had myself contemplated his (Colonel Burr's) appointment to one of the great offices, in case he was not elected Vice-President, but that as soon as that election was known, I saw that it could not be done, for the good reasons which had led General Washington and Mr. Adams to the same conclusion; and, therefore, in my first letter to Colonel Burr after the issue was known, I had mentioned to him that a chasm in my arrangements had been produced by this event. I was thus particular in rectifying the date of this letter, because it gave me an opportunity of explaining the grounds on which it was written, which were, indirectly, *an answer to his present hints*. He left the matter with me for consideration, and the conversation was turned to indifferent subjects."

Mr. Jefferson concludes this day's journalizing with the following remarks: "I had never seen Colonel Burr till he came as a member of the Senate. His conduct very soon inspired me with distrust. I habitually cautioned Mr. Madison against trusting him too much. I saw, afterward, that, under General Washington's and Mr. Adams's administrations, whenever a great military appointment, or a diplomatic one was to be made, he came post to Philadelphia to show himself, and, in fact, that he was always at market, if they had wanted him. He was, indeed, told by Dayton, in 1800, he might be Secretary at War; but this bid was too late. His election as Vice-President was then foreseen. With these impressions of Colonel Burr, there never had been an intimacy between us, and but little association. When I destined him for a high appointment, it was out of respect for the favor he had obtained

with the Republican party, by his extraordinary exertions and successes in the New York election in 1800."

Mr. Jefferson's memory was a little at fault here. While the Republican party was slowly working its way to a majority, and the effective help of Colonel Burr was given freely to the cause, Jefferson's manner toward him was cordial to a somewhat marked degree. In June, 1797, for example, he began a long and unsolicited letter to Colonel Burr, with these words: "The newspapers give so minutely what is passing in Congress, that nothing of detail can be wanting for your information. Perhaps, however, some general view of our situation and prospects since you left us may not be unacceptable. At any rate, it will give me an opportunity of recalling myself to your memory, and of evidencing my esteem for you."

A few slips of this kind are all the Federal writers have to support their charge against Jefferson of insincerity. One needs little observation of life, and less charity, to give them a very different interpretation. And, after all, the discrepancy is not great. In 1797, he had an *esteem* for Colonel Burr; in 1804, he says he had never *liked* him, and had cautioned Madison against trusting him *too far*. Liking and esteeming are sentiments so different that either may exist in a high degree without the other. In 1804, it is plain, Jefferson's dislike of Burr was extreme, perhaps morbid, and De Witt Clinton himself was not more averse to his further political advancement. Jefferson admits, in one of his later letters, that upon learning Burr's designs, after their interview, it was he who caused information of the same to be sent to the Clintons in New York.

Repulsed by the chief, hated by the Republican leaders in his own State, distrusted by large numbers of the party, Colonel Burr and his friends resolved upon an appeal to the people. In February the plan was matured, and Burr was announced as an independent candidate for the governorship of New York. A small caucus of members of the legislature formally nominated him on the 18th of February, and on subsequent days the nomination was ratified by public meetings in

Albany and New York. "Say to your husband," wrote Burr to his daughter, on the 16th, "that the Clintons, Livingstons, etc., had not, at the last advice from Albany, decided on their candidate for governor. Hamilton is intriguing for any candidate who can have a chance of success against A. B. He would, doubtless, become the advocate of even De Witt Clinton, if he should be the opponent."

This was true. Hamilton saw the *ulterior* advantages which the election of Burr as governor would give him, and he opposed it in all ways, and with the whole weight of his influence. The Federal party, reduced now to a faction, had no serious thoughts of even nominating a candidate, and Hamilton's efforts were concentrated on the single object of defeating Burr. Governor Clinton declined a reëlection. Lansing, a politician of long experience and high respectability, was the candidate first named by the Republicans, and Hamilton was strenuous, in caucus and out of caucus, in urging the Federalists to vote for him. A short article of Hamilton's on this point, which has been thought worthy of republication in his works, gives eight reasons "why it is desirable that Mr. Lansing, rather than Colonel Burr, should succeed." To complete the evidence in the great case of Hamilton against Burr, this catalogue of "Reasons" is here inserted:

"1. Colonel Burr has steadily pursued the track of democratic politics. This he had done either from *principle* or from *calculation*. If the former, he is not likely now to change his plan, when the Federalists are prostrate, and their enemies predominant. If the latter, he will certainly not at this time relinquish the ladder of his ambition, and espouse the cause or views of the weaker party.

"2. Though detested by some of the leading Clintonians, he is certainly not personally disagreeable to the great body of them, and it will be no difficult task for a man of talents, intrigue, and address, possessing the chair of government, to rally the great body of them under his standard, and thereby to consolidate for personal purposes the mass of the Clintonians, his own adherents among the Democrats, and such Fed-

eralists, as, from personal good-will or interested motives, may give him support.

"3. The effect of his elevation will be to reunite, under a more adroit, able, and daring chief, the now scattered fragments of the democratic party, and to reinforce it by a strong detachment from the Federalists. For though virtuous Federalists who, from miscalculation, may support him, would afterward relinquish his standard, a large number, from various motives, would continue attached to it.

"4. A further effect of his elevation, by aid of the Federalists will be to present to the confidence of New England a man already the man of the democratic leaders of that country, and toward whom the mass of the people have no weak predilection, as their countryman, as the grandson of President Edwards, and the son of President Burr. In vain will certain men resist this predilection, when it can be said that he was chosen Governor of this State, in which he was best known, principally, or in a great degree, by the aid of the Federalists.

"5. This will give him fair play to disorganize New England, if so disposed; a thing not very difficult, when the strength of the democratic party in each of the New England States is considered, and the natural tendency of our civil institutions is duly weighed.

"6. The ill-opinion of Jefferson, and the jealousy of the ambition of Virginia, is no inconsiderable prop of good principles in that country. But these causes are leading to an opinion, that a dismemberment of the Union is expedient. It would probably suit Mr. Burr's views to promote this result, to be the chief of the northern portion; and placed at the head of the State of New York, no man would be more likely to succeed.

"7. If he be truly, as the Federalists have believed, a man of irregular and insatiable ambition, if his plan has been to rise to power on the ladder of Jacobinic principles, it is natural to conclude that he will endeavor to fix himself in power by the same instrument; that he will not lean on a fallen and falling party, generally speaking, not of a character to favor usurpa-

tion and the ascendency of a despotic chief. Every day shows, more and more, the much to be regretted tendency of governments entirely popular, to dissolution and disorder. Is it rational to expect that a man, who had the sagacity to foresee this tendency, and whose temper would permit him to bottom his aggrandizement on popular prejudice and vices, would desert the system at the time when, more than ever, the state of things invites him to adhere to it?

"8. If Lansing is governor, his personal character affords some security against pernicious extremes, and at the same time renders it morally certain that the democratic party, already much divided and weakened, will molder and break asunder more and more. This is certainly a state of things favorable to the future ascendency of the wise and good. May it not lead to a recasting of parties, by which the Federalists will gain a great accession of force from former opponents? At any rate, is it not wiser in them to promote a course of things by which schism among the Democrats will be fostered and increased, than, on a fair calculation, to give them a chief, better able than any they have yet had, to unite and direct them; and in a situation to infuse rottenness in the only part of our country which still remains sound, the Federal States of New England?"

This article was written too soon; for, in a few days, Mr. Lansing, much to Hamilton's regret, declined, and Chief Justice Lewis was nominated in his stead. Lewis was a more decided partisan, and a less acceptable man than Lansing, and his nomination was supposed to be favorable to the prospects of Colonel Burr. "From the moment Clinton declined," wrote Hamilton to Rufus King, "I began to consider Burr as having a chance of success. It was still, however, my reliance that Lansing would outrun him; but now that Chief Justice Lewis is his competitor, the probability, in my judgment, inclines to Burr." To defeat him, Hamilton's first scheme was to run Rufus King as the regular candidate of the Federal party. That abandoned, he confined his exertions to keeping as many Federal voters as possible from supporting the detested candidate.

I need not dwell on the contest, the result of which is only too well known. Like nine out of ten of our State, and seven out of ten of our national elections, it was a contest without an idea; a preposterous struggle to put another man in a place already well-filled.

The Address put forth by the Burrites dwelt upon their candidate's being a *single* man, with no train of family connections to quarter upon the public treasury; upon his talents and revolutionary services; upon the stand he had made against the British treaty; upon the recent endeavors, on the part of wealthy factions, to destroy, by unprecedented calumnies, the confidence of the people in the Vice-President's integrity; upon his liberal patronage of science and the fine arts; upon the recent sale of part of his estate, and the payment of his debts; upon his known generosity and disinterestedness; and, finally, upon the character of his great ancestors, President Burr and President Edwards, the best traits of both of whom, said the Address, were blended in the character of Colonel Burr.

It was an animated and very acrimonious contest. Burr's friends, it is true, conducted their canvass with decorum, and never once assailed the private character of the opposing candidate. But Cheetham teemed with lies. For two months, his paper was chiefly devoted to maligning and burlesqueing the character of Burr and his adherents. Jefferson gave the weight of his great name to the Clintonian candidate. A conversation in which the President was represented as declaring that the "*Little Band*" (Cheetham's nickname for Burr's set) was *not* the real democracy, was printed in capitals in the *American Citizen*, and kept standing during the three days of the election.* Not content with what his paper could effect, Cheetham, on the second day of the election, printed a handbill, setting forth that Burr was a remorseless and wholesale seducer; that the brothels of New York were filled

* One of Cheetham's fables was, that on the night before the election, the Vice-President, through Alexis, his slave, had given a ball to the colored voters at Richmond Hill, and that he had himself led out to the dance a bu..om wench. This story was given as a ballad in the *American Citizen.*

with his victims; and that the father of one of them was at that moment in the city burning to wreak a deadly vengeance upon the seducer's head. This handbill Cheetham distributed with his own hands at the polls.

But the "Little Band" were confident of success, and worked for it as men seldom work for the advantage of another.

Burr himself was, as usual, imperturbable. March 28th he wrote to Theodosia: "They are very busy here about an election between Morgan Lewis and A. Burr, the former supported by the Livingstons and Clintons, the latter *per se*. I would send you some new and amusing libels against the Vice-President, but, as you did not send the speech," etc. April 25th, which was the second day of the election: "I write in a storm; an election storm, of the like you have once been a witness. The thing began yesterday and will terminate to-morrow. My head-quarters are in John-street, and I have, since the beginning of this letter, been already three times interrupted. * * * Both parties claim majorities, and there never was, in my opinion, an election, of the result of which so little judgment could be formed. A. B. will have a small majority in the city *if to-morrow should be a fair day*, and not else." The morrow *was* a fair day. A. B. *did* have a small majority (about one hundred) in the city. For a few hours, the Burrites exulted; but returns from the country soon changed their note. Five days after, among the gossipy paragraphs of an unusually gossipy letter from Burr to his daughter, occurred this single line about the election: "The election is lost by a great majority; *so much the better*." Lewis had, in fact, received 35,000 votes; Burr, 28,000; majority for Lewis, 7,000.

He was beaten, but, by no means, destroyed, as is usually represented. A large number of his original supporters had abandoned him; but, besides his own peculiar adherents, he was now strong in the confidence of the more moderate Federalists, and nothing but Hamilton's vehement opposition had prevented that party's voting for him *en masse*. He had, also, this advantage — the libels which had destroyed his standing,

for the time, with his own party, were not only false, but were *known* to be false by the leaders of both sides. The truth was likely to become manifest, and a reaction to set in, which might bear him in triumph over all opposition to more than his former elevation. The spectacle of a man who owes his fortune to his own exertions, contending singly against ancient wealth and powerful families, is one which appeals to the sympathies and to the imagination of Anglo-Saxons. With tact such as his, with friends so devoted, with partisans so warm, with enemies so feebly united that they only awaited his downfall to war with one another, who could say what he might not effect before another presidential election came round?

It is a mistake, too, to suppose that the result of this election rendered Colonel Burr morose and gloomy. Colonel Burr, in all his long life, never knew a gloomy day nor a morose hour. One who applies such epithets to him shows by that fact alone, that he is ignorant of the man's character. His spirits rode as buoyantly and as safely over all disasters as a cork over the cataract of Niagara. There was not in him the stuff out of which gloom is made. He was of Damascus quality; his elasticity was inexhaustible. Cheetham was not very wrong, perhaps, when he said that Burr was *elated* by the result of the election; as it showed him his strength as an independent candidate, and gave him new hopes of being able to form a great democratic, anti-Virginia party..

Would that he could have paused here, and buried in oblivion political aspirations and animosities. A bright career was still before him in the law. Hamilton had won great glory this very spring, by defending at Albany, before the Supreme Court, with unparalleled eloquence, an editor who had been indicted for a libel on the President. His grand object was, by annihilating the maxim, "The greater the truth, the greater the libel," to establish on new and broad foundations the liberty of the press. "After all, came the powerful Hamilton," wrote a correspondent of the *Evening Post*. "No language can convey an adequate idea of the astonishing powers evinced by him. The audience was numerous, and though

composed of those not used to the melting mood, the effect produced on them was electric. * * * As a correct argument for a lawyer, it was very imposing, as a profound commentary upon the science and practice of government, it has never been surpassed." Here was glory; here was triumph. Burr's eminence at the bar was such that, on all cases of commanding interest, he was the man likely to be selected to oppose Hamilton or to aid him.

For any thing that is now *known*, Burr may have meant to confine himself to the peaceful triumphs of the bar. But, alas! the curse of having made a false step in life is, that it *necessitates* worse!

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DUEL.

The General Provocation — The Particular Provocation — The Hostile Correspondence — The Challenge Given and Accepted — Hamilton's Conduct, and Burr's Letters before the Meeting — The Banquet of the Cincinnati — The Last Writings of Hamilton and Burr — The Dueling Ground — The Duel — Effect on the Public Mind — The Coroner's Verdict — Dr. Nott's Sermon — The Monument to Hamilton on the Ground.

As habit is second nature, dueling must formerly have seemed a very natural mode of settling personal disputes, for few public men passed through life without being concerned in, at least, one "affair of honor." Gates, De Witt Clinton, Randolph, Benton, Clay, Jackson, Decatur, Arnold, Walpole, Pitt, Wellington, Canning, Peel, Grattan, Fox, Sheridan, Jeffrey, Wilkes, D'Israeli, Lamartine, Thiers, and scores of less famous names, are found in Mr. Sabine's* list of duelists.

In all that curious catalogue, there is not the name of one politician who received provocation so often-repeated, so irritating, and so injurious, as that which Aaron Burr had received from Alexander Hamilton.

Burr was not a man to resent promptly a personal injury, even when what he called his "honor" impelled him to do so. The infidelity of a comrade cut him to the heart; to be doubted by a friend, was, as he once said, "to have the very sanctuary of happiness invaded;" the disapproval of his own set he would have felt acutely. But, to the outcry of the outer world he was comparatively indifferent, and the injurious attempts of enemies he usually disregarded. Aaron Burr, whatever faults he may have had — and he had grievous and radical faults — was *not* a revengeful man; there has seldom lived one who was less so. He had to be much persuaded

* "Notes on Duels and Dueling." By Lorenzo Sabine.

before he would sue Cheetham for libel, and the suit was languidly prosecuted. Cheetham himself, in January of this very year, 1804, had taunted him for allowing Hamilton to speak and write of him as it was then notorious he was in the habit of doing. "Is the Vice-President sunk so low," said this wretched calumniator, "as to submit to be insulted by General Hamilton?"

At every step of Burr's political career, without a single exception, Hamilton, by open efforts, by secret intrigue, or by both, had utterly opposed and forbidden his advancement. He had injured him in the estimation of General Washington. He had prevented Mr. Adams from giving him a military appointment. His letters, for years, had abounded in denunciations of him, as severe and unqualified as the language of a powerful declaimer could convey. From Burr's own table, he had carried away the unguarded sallies of the host for use against the political opponent. The most offensive epithets and phrases he had so habitually applied to Burr, that they had become familiar in the mouths of all the leading Federalists; who, as the reader may have observed, denounced Colonel Burr in Hamilton's own words. And, finally, he had just succeeded in frustrating Burr's keen desire for vindication at the people's hands; and, in doing so, had made it only too evident to all the influential politicians, that for the success of any plans of political advancement which Burr might in future form, it was, above all things else, essential that Hamilton's injurious tongue should be either silenced or bridled.

The two men had already been near collision. I think it was in 1802 that Colonel Burr, having obtained some imperfect knowledge of Hamilton's usual mode of characterizing him, had had a conversation with him on the subject. Hamilton (so said Burr in later years), had explained, apologized, satisfied Burr, and left upon his mind the impression, never effaced, that thenceforth Hamilton was pledged to refrain from speaking of him as he had been accustomed to do. They parted with cordiality, and had ever since been, apparently, very good friends. Burr considered then, and always, that he had made prodigious sacrifices, as a man of honor and a

gentleman, for the sake of avoiding a hostile meeting that could not but injure both as candidates for the public confidence. From the hour Burr learned that Hamilton still used his former freedom, he ceased to respect him; he held him in contempt, as a man insensible to considerations of honor and good faith. Burr's new Federal friends, renegades from the Hamiltonian party, had given him new information respecting the *Burriphobia* under which their former leader labored, and the language in which it was accustomed to find vent.

Consider the force of another circumstance upon a mind like Burr's, whose religion was, fidelity to comrades. Men who proudly looked up to him as more than their political chief — as the preëminent gentleman, and model man of the world, of that age — had fought in his quarrel, and fought with a reckless courage which he had first inspired, and then commanded. If the occasion should arise, could chief decline the encounter with chief, after the subalterns had so gallantly contended? And this consideration had equal weight with Hamilton. Beside having sanctioned the practice of dueling, by serving as second to Colonel Laurens in his duel with General Lee, his own son had fallen, three years ago, in what the language of that day called the vindication of his father's honor. In short, *never*, since the duello was invented, were two men, if the requisite technical provocation should arise, so peculiarly and irresistibly bound to fight, as were Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton in the summer of 1804.

During the late election for governor, a letter from Dr. Charles D. Cooper to a friend, found its way into the papers, which contained two sentences relating to Colonel Burr. One was this:

"General Hamilton and Judge Kent have declared, in substance, that they looked upon Mr. Burr to be a dangerous man, and one who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government."

This was the other: "I could detail to you a still more despicable opinion which General Hamilton has expressed of Mr. Burr."

Six weeks after the election, the paper containing this letter was put into Colonel Burr's hands, and his attention called to the allusions to himself.

In the afternoon of June 17th, Mr. William P. Van Ness, one of Burr's stanchest friends, the *Aristides* of the pamphlet war of 1802, received a note from Colonel Burr, requesting him to call at Richmond Hill on the following morning. He went. At the request of Burr, he conveyed Dr. Cooper's letter to General Hamilton, with the most offensive passage marked, and a note from Colonel Burr, which, as briefly as possible, called attention to the passage, and concluded with the following words: "You must perceive, sir, the necessity of a prompt and unqualified acknowledgment or denial of the use of any expressions which would warrant the assertions of Mr. Cooper."

Hamilton was taken by surprise. He had not, before that moment, seen Cooper's letter. Having read it, and the note of Colonel Burr, he said that they required consideration, and he would send an answer to Mr. Van Ness's office (Van Ness was a lawyer) in the course of the day. Late that evening he called at Mr. Van Ness's residence, and told him that a press of business had prevented his preparing a reply, and would prevent him for two days to come; but on the 20th he would give him a communication for Colonel Burr.

In that communication, which was very long, Hamilton declined making the acknowledgment or denial that Burr had demanded. Between gentlemen, he said, *despicable* and *more despicable* was not worth the pains of distinction. He could not consent to be interrogated as to the justice of the *inferences* which others might have drawn from what he had said of an opponent during fifteen years' competition. But he stood ready to avow or disavow explicitly any *definite* opinion which he might be charged with having expressed respecting any gentleman. He trusted that Colonel Burr, upon further reflection, would see the matter in the same light. If not, he could only regret the fact, and abide the consequences.

This letter was oil upon the flames of Burr's indignation.

His reply was prompt and decided. Hamilton's letters can generally be condensed one half without the loss of an idea, Burr's compact directness defies abbreviation:

"Your letter of the 20th inst.," wrote he, "has been this day received. Having considered it attentively, I regret to find in it nothing of that sincerity and delicacy which you profess to value. Political opposition can never absolve gentlemen from the necessity of a rigid adherence to the laws of honor and the rules of decorum. I neither claim such privilege nor indulge it in others. The common sense of mankind affixes to the epithet adopted by Dr. Cooper the idea of dishonor. It has been publicly applied to me under the sanction of your name. The question is not, whether he has understood the meaning of the word, or has used it according to syntax, and with grammatical accuracy; but, whether you have authorized this application, either directly or by uttering expressions or opinions derogatory to my honor. The time 'when' is in your own knowledge, but no way material to me, as the calumny has now first been disclosed, so as to become the subject of my notice, and as the effect is present and palpable. Your letter has furnished me with new reasons for requiring a definite reply."

Hamilton seems to have read his doom in that letter. He said to Mr. Van Ness, who brought it, that it was such a letter as he had hoped not to receive; it contained several offensive expressions; and seemed to close the door to reply. He had hoped that Mr. Burr would have desired him to state what had fallen from him that might have given rise to the inference of Dr. Cooper. He would have done that frankly, and he believed it would not have been found to exceed justifiable limits. And even then, if Mr. Burr was disposed to give another turn to the discussion, he was willing to consider his last letter undelivered. But if that were not withdrawn, he could make no reply.

Mr. Van Ness detailed these ideas to Colonel Burr, and received from him a paper of instructions to guide him in replying, verbally, to General Hamilton. This paper expresses with force and exactness the view of this affair then

taken, and always adhered to, by Colonel Burr. It read as follows:

"A. Burr, far from conceiving that rivalship authorizes a latitude not otherwise justifiable, always feels greater delicacy in such cases, and would think it meanness to speak of a rival but in terms of respect; to do justice to his merits; to be silent of his foibles. Such has invariably been his conduct toward Jay, Adams, and Hamilton; the only three who can be supposed to have stood in that relation to him.

"That he has too much reason to believe that, in regard to Mr. Hamilton, there has been no reciprocity. For several years his name has been lent to the support of base slanders. He has never had the generosity, the magnanimity, or the candor to contradict or disavow. Burr forbears to particularize, as it could only tend to produce new irritations; but, having made great sacrifices for the sake of harmony; having exercised forbearance until it approached to humiliation, he has seen no effect produced by such conduct but a repetition of injury. He is obliged to conclude that there is, on the part of Mr. Hamilton, a settled and implacable malevolence; that he will never cease, in his conduct toward Mr. Burr, to violate those courtesies of life; and that, hence, he has no alternative but to announce these things to the world; which, consistently with Mr. Burr's ideas of propriety, can be done in no way but that which he has adopted. He is incapable of revenge, still less is he capable of imitating the conduct of Mr. Hamilton, by committing secret depredations on his fame and character. But these things must have an end."

Upon meeting General Hamilton for the purpose of making the above explanation, Mr. Van Ness was informed by him, that he had prepared a written reply to Colonel Burr's last letter, and had left it in the hands of his friend Mr. Pendleton. The verbal explanation was therefore withheld, and General Hamilton's letter conveyed to Colonel Burr. It was as follows: "Your first letter, in a style too peremptory, made a demand, in my opinion, unprecedented and unwarrantable. My answer, pointing out the embarrassment, gave you an opportunity to take a less exceptionable course. You have not

chosen to do it; but by your last letter received this day, containing expressions *indecorous* and improper, you have increased the difficulties to explanation intrinsically incident to the nature of your application. If by a 'definite reply' you mean the direct avowal or disavowal required in your first letter, I have no other answer to give, than that which has already been given. If you mean any thing different, admitting of greater latitude, it is requisite you should explain."

This letter, as might have been expected, produced no effect; as Mr. Van Ness hastened to inform General Hamilton's friend. Van Ness added, that what Colonel Burr demanded was this: a general disavowal of any intention on the part of General Hamilton, in his various conversations, to convey impressions derogatory to the honor of Burr. Pendleton replied, that he believed General Hamilton would have no objection to make such a declaration!

Hamilton, of course, declined making the disavowal. But he gave Van Ness a paper, in his own hand, the purport of which was that if Colonel Burr should think it proper to inquire of General Hamilton the nature of the conversation with Dr. Cooper, General Hamilton would be able to reply, with truth, that it turned wholly on political topics, and did not attribute to Colonel Burr any instance of dishonorable conduct, nor relate to his private character. And in relation to any other conversation which Colonel Burr would specify, a frank avowal or denial would be given.

A "mere evasion," said Burr, when he had read this paper.

Other correspondence followed, but it is too familiar to the public, and too easily accessible, to require repetition here. Throughout the whole of it we see, on the one hand, an exasperated man resolved to bring the affair to a decisive and final issue; on the other, a man striving desperately, but not dishonorably, to escape the consequences of his own too ungarded words. Burr's final recapitulation, drawn up for the guidance of his second, was as follows:

"Colonel Burr (in reply to General Hamilton's charge of indefiniteness and inquisition) would only say, that secret whispers traducing his fame, and impeaching his honor, are at least

equally injurious with slanders publicly uttered; that General Hamilton had, at no time, and in no place, a right to use any such injurious expressions; and that the partial negative he is disposed to give, with the reservations he wishes to make, are proofs that he has done the injury specified.

"Colonel Burr's request was, in the first instance, proposed in a form the most simple, in order that General Hamilton might give to the affair that course to which he might be induced by his temper and his knowledge of facts. Colonel Burr trusted with confidence, that, from the frankness of a soldier and the candor of a gentleman, he might expect an ingenuous declaration. That if, as he had reason to believe, General Hamilton had used expressions derogatory to his honor, he would have had the magnanimity to retract them; and that if, from his language, injurious inferences had been improperly drawn, he would have perceived the propriety of correcting errors, which might thus have been widely diffused. With these impressions, Colonel Burr was greatly surprised at receiving a letter which he considered as evasive, and which in manner he deemed not altogether decorous. In one expectation, however, he was not wholly deceived, for the close of General Hamilton's letter contained an intimation that, if Colonel Burr should dislike his refusal to acknowledge or deny, he was ready to meet the consequences. This Colonel Burr deemed a sort of defiance, and would have felt justified in making it the basis of an immediate message. But as the communication contained something concerning the indefiniteness of the request, as he believed it rather the offspring of false pride than of reflection, and as he felt the utmost reluctance to proceed to extremities, while any other hope remained, his request was repeated in terms more explicit. The replies and propositions on the part of General Hamilton have, in Colonel Burr's opinion, been constantly in substance the same.

"Colonel Burr disavows all motives of predetermined hostility, a charge by which he thinks insult added to injury. He feels as a gentleman should feel when his honor is impeached or assailed; and, without sensations of hostility or wishes of

revenge, he is determined to vindicate that honor at such hazard as the nature of the case demands."

The letter concluded with the remark that the length and fruitlessness of the correspondence proved it useless "to offer any proposition, except the simple message which I shall now have the honor to deliver."

The challenge was then given and accepted. Ten days had elapsed since Colonel Burr had first sent for Mr. Van Ness, and it was now the 27th of June. Mr. Pendleton stated that a court was then sitting in which General Hamilton had much business to transact; he would require also a little time to arrange his private affairs; and, therefore, some delay was unavoidable. This was assented to, and the next morning appointed for a meeting of the seconds to confer further on time and place.

At that meeting Mr. Pendleton presented a paper which, he said, he had received from his principal, and which contained some remarks upon the matters in dispute. Van Ness replied that, if the paper contained a specific proposition for an accommodation, he would receive it with pleasure; if not, he must decline doing so, as his principal considered the correspondence completely terminated by the acceptance of the challenge. Pendleton replied that the paper contained no such proposition, but consisted of remarks upon Van Ness's last letter. Mr. Van Ness, therefore, refused to receive it,* and Pendleton retired, promising to call again in a day or two to make the final arrangements. The seconds conferred several times before these were concluded; but, at length, July

* This paper was an earnest endeavor, on the part of General Hamilton, to avoid a hostile meeting. The material passage was as follows: "Mr. Pendleton is authorized to say, that in the course of the present discussion, written or verbal, there has been no intention to evade, defy, or insult, but a sincere disposition to avoid extremities, if it could be done with propriety. With this view General Hamilton has been ready to enter into a frank and free explanation on any and every object of a specific nature; but not to answer a general and abstract inquiry, embracing a period too long for any accurate recollection, and exposing him to unpleasant criticisms from, or unpleasant discussions with, any and every person who may have understood him in an unfavorable sense."

11th, at seven in the morning, was fixed upon as the time; the place, Weehawken; the weapons, pistols; the distance, ten paces. Thus, between the time when Colonel Burr sent for Van Ness and the day appointed for the meeting, twenty-four days elapsed, during the greater part of which the secret was known, certainly, to seven persons, and, probably, to as many as ten.

During this long period, the principals went about their daily business as usual. Hamilton, as was afterward fondly remembered, plead his causes and consulted his clients, with all his wonted vigor, courtesy, and success. Around his table at the "Grange," day after day, he saw his seven children and his tenderly beloved wife, with a ceaseless consciousness of the blow that was suspended over them all. A whisper could have saved him, and saved them, but how impossible it was to utter that whisper!

Burr was residing at cedar-crowned Richmond Hill, and found the great mansion there somewhat lone and chilly. On June 23d (the very day upon which it became certain that the affair with Hamilton could only be terminated by a duel) Theodosia's birth-day came round again, a day on which Richmond Hill, for many a year, had known only the sights and sounds of happiness and mirth. Burr was an observer of fête days and family festivals. On this occasion, he invited a party to dinner, who, as he wrote the next day to Theodosia, "laughed an hour, and danced an hour, and drank her health." He had her picture brought into the dining-room and placed at the table where she was accustomed to sit. But, added he, "as it is a profile, and would not look at us, we hung it up, and placed Natalie's (his adopted daughter) at table, which laughs and talks with us." The letter in which these particulars are given is remarkable for containing a suggestion which has since been admirably improved. "Your idea," wrote he, "of dressing up pieces of ancient mythology in the form of amusing tales for children is very good. You *yourself* must write them. Send your performances to me, and, within three weeks after they are received, you shall have them again in print. This will be not only an amusing occupation, but a

very useful one to yourself. It will improve your style and your language, give you habits of accuracy, and add a little to your stock of knowledge. Natalie, too, must work at it, and I'll bet that she makes the best tale. I will be your editor and your critic." The reader is aware how well this "idea" has since been carried out by Mr. Kingsley and others.

His letters to his daughter, at this period, contain but a single allusion, and that a vague one, to the impending conflict. On the 1st of July, he began a letter with these words:

"Having been shivering with cold all day, though in perfect health, I have now, just at sunset, had a fire in my library, and am sitting near it and enjoying it, if that word be applicable to any thing done in solitude. Some very wise man, however, has exclaimed,

"'Oh! fools, who think it solitude to be alone.'

This is but poetry. Let us therefore drop the subject, lest it lead to another on which I have imposed silence on myself."

The rest of the letter is cheerful enough. He says he is impatient to receive the "Tales," recommends her to subscribe for the *Edinburg Review*, and to be forming a library for her son.

On the Fourth of July, Hamilton and Burr met, for the last time, at the convivial board. It was at the annual banquet of the Society of the Cincinnati, of which Hamilton was president and Burr a member. Hamilton was cheerful, and, at times, merry. He was urged, as the feast wore away, to sing the only song he ever sang or knew, the famous old ballad of *The Drum*. It was thought afterward, that he was more reluctant than usual to comply with the company's request; but after some delay, he said, "Well, you shall have it," and sang it in his best manner, greatly to the delight of the old soldiers by whom he was surrounded. Burr, on the contrary, was reserved, mingled little with the company, and held no intercourse with the president. He was never a fluent man, and was generally, in the society of men, more a listener than a talker. On this occasion, his silence was, therefore, the less

remarked; yet it was remarked. It was observed, too, that he paid no attention to Hamilton's conversation, nor, indeed, looked toward him, until he struck up his song, when Burr turned toward him, and, leaning upon the table, looked at the singer till the song was done.

This difference in the behavior of the two men was doubtless owing partly to their different positions at the banquet. Hamilton, as the master of the feast, was in the eye of every guest, while Burr could easily escape particular observation. The object of both was, of course, to behave so as not to excite inquiry.

On the 9th of July, Hamilton executed his will, leaving his all, after the payment of his debts, to his 'dear and excellent wife.' "Should it happen," said he, "that there is not enough for the payment of my debts, I entreat my dear children, if they, or any of them, should ever be able, to make up the deficiency. I, without hesitation, commit to their delicacy a wish which is dictated by my own. Though conscious that I have too far sacrificed the interests of my family to public avocations, and on this account have the less claim to burden my children, yet I trust in their magnanimity to appreciate as they ought this my request. In so unfavorable an event of things, the support of their dear mother, with the most respectful and tender attention, is a duty, all the sacredness of which they will feel. Probably her own patrimonial resources will preserve her from indigence. But in all situations they are charged to bear in mind, that she has been to them the most devoted and best of mothers."

A few hours more brought them to the day before the one named for the meeting. In the evening, both the principals were engaged, to a late hour, in making their final preparations, and writing what each felt might be his last written words. The paper prepared by Hamilton on that occasion, in the solitude of his library, reveals to us the miserable spectacle of an intelligent and gifted man, who had, with the utmost deliberation, made up his mind to do an action which his intellect condemned as absurd, which his heart felt to be cruel, which his conscience told him was wrong. He said that

he had shrunk from the coming interview. His duty to his religion, his family, and his creditors, forbade it. He should hazard much, and could gain nothing by it. He was conscious of no ill-will to Colonel Burr, apart from political opposition, which he hoped had proceeded from pure and upright motives. But there were difficulties, intrinsic and artificial, in the way of an accommodation, which had seemed insuperable; *intrinsic*, because he really *had* been very severe upon Colonel Burr; *artificial*, because Colonel Burr had demanded too much, and in a manner that precluded a peaceful discussion of the difficulty.

"As well," this affecting paper concluded, "because it is possible that I may have injured Colonel Burr, however convinced myself that my opinions and declarations have been well founded, as from my general principles and temper in relation to similar affairs, I have resolved, if our interview is conducted in the usual manner, and it pleases God to give me the opportunity, to reserve and throw away my first fire, and I have thoughts even of reserving my second fire, and thus giving a double opportunity to Colonel Burr to pause and to reflect. It is not, however, my intention to enter into any explanations on the ground. Apology, from principle, I hope, rather than pride, is out of the question. To those who, with me, abhorring the practice of dueling, may think that I ought on no account to have added to the number of bad examples, I answer, that my relative situation, as well in public as in private, enforcing all the considerations which constitute what men of the world denominate honor, imposed on me (as I thought) a peculiar necessity not to decline the call. The ability to be in the future useful, whether in resisting mischief or effecting good, in those crises of our public affairs which seem likely to happen, would probably be inseparable from a conformity with public prejudice in this particular."

Doing evil that good may come, though not the crime it is to do good that evil may come, is a dreadful error. It was the vice of Hamilton's otherwise worthy life. It proved fatal to him at last.

In the long letters which Burr wrote that evening, there

are no signs that the gentle blood of Esther Edwards was revolting in the veins of her erring son against the morrow's deed. There is a tender dignity in his farewell words to Theodosia, but no misgivings. He gives her a number of minute directions about the disposal of his papers, letters, and servants. She was enjoined to burn all such letters as, if by accident made public, would injure any person. This, he added, was more particularly applicable to the letters of his female correspondents. To his step-son, "poor dear Frederic," to Natalie, to various friends, he requested her to give certain tokens of his remembrance. His faithful housekeeper, Peggy, was to have a lot of ground and fifty dollars, and the other servants Theodosia was urged to adopt as her own. His letter concludes with these touching words: "I am indebted to you, my dearest Theodosia, for a very great portion of the happiness which I have enjoyed in this life. You have completely satisfied all that my heart and affections had hoped or even wished. With a little more perseverance, determination, and industry, you will obtain all that my ambition or vanity had fondly imagined. Let your son have occasion to be proud that he had a mother. Adieu. Adieu."

In a postscript, he tells her, upon her arrival in New York, to open her whole heart to his step-son, Frederic, who loves him, he says, almost as much as Theodosia does, and loves Theodosia to adoration. He also gives her a seal of General Washington's, which he possessed, and says she may keep it for her son, or give it to whom she pleases.

He wrote a long letter to her husband, recommending to his regard and care the friends to whom he was most attached. "If it should be my lot to fall," he said, in conclusion, "yet I shall live in you and your son. I commit to you all that is most dear to me — my reputation and my daughter. Your talents and your attachment will be the guardian of the one — your kindness and your generosity of the other. Let me entreat you to stimulate and aid Theodosia in the cultivation of her mind. It is indispensable to her happiness, and essential to yours. It is also of the utmost importance to your son. She would presently acquire a critical knowledge of

Latin, English, and all branches of natural philosophy. All this would be poured into your son. If you should differ with me as to the importance of this measure, suffer me to ask it of you as a last favor. She will richly compensate your trouble."

Two very characteristic postscripts are appended to this letter. In the first, he commends to Mr. Alston's special regard, Frederic Prevost. "Under the garb of coarse rusticity you will find, if you know him, refinement, wit, a delicate sense of propriety, the most inflexible intrepidity, incorruptible integrity, and disinterestedness. I wish you could know him; but it would be difficult, by reason of his diffidence and great reluctance to mingle with the world. It has been a source of extreme regret and mortification to me that he should be lost to society and to his friends. The case seems almost remediless, for, alas! *he is married!*"

The other postscript was as follows: "If you can pardon and indulge a folly, I would suggest that Madame ——, too well known under the name of Leonora, has claims on my recollection. She is now with her husband at St. Jago, of Cuba."

Late at night Colonel Burr threw off his upper garments, lay down upon a couch in his library, and, in a few minutes, was asleep.

At daybreak, next morning, John Swartwout entered the room, and saw his chief still lying on the couch. Well as he knew Colonel Burr, he was astonished, upon approaching him, to discover that he was in a sound and tranquil slumber. He awoke the man who had better never again have opened his eyes upon the light of this world. Van Ness was soon ready. Matthew L. Davis and another friend or two arrived, and the party proceeded in silence to the river, where a boat was in readiness. Burr, Van Ness, Davis, and another embarked, and the boat was rowed over the river toward Weehawken, the scene, in those days, of so many deadly encounters.

Few of the present generation have stood upon the spot, which was formerly one of the places that strangers were sure to visit on coming to the city, and which the events of this

SCENE OF THE DUEL.

day rendered for ever memorable. Two miles and a half above the city of Hoboken, the heights of Weehawken rise, in the picturesque form so familiar to New Yorkers, to an elevation of a hundred and fifty feet above the Hudson. These heights are rocky, very steep, and covered with small trees and tangled bushes. Under the heights, at a point half a mile from where they begin, there is, twenty feet above the water, a grassy ledge or shelf, about six feet wide, and eleven paces long. This was the fatal spot. Except that it is slightly encumbered with underbrush, it is, at this hour, precisely what it was on the 11th of July, 1804. There is an old cedar-tree at the side, a little out of range, which must have looked then very much as it does now. The large rocks which partly hem in the place are, of course, unchanged, except that they are decorated with the initials of former visitors. One large rock, breast-high, narrows the hollow in which Hamilton stood to four feet or less.

Inaccessible to foot-passengers along the river, except at low tide, with no path down to it from the rocky heights above, no residence within sight on that side of the river, unless at a great distance, it is even now a singularly secluded scene. But fifty years ago, when no prophet had yet predicted Hoboken, that romantic shore was a nearly unbroken solitude. A third of a mile below the dueling-ground there stood a little tavern, the occasional resort of excursionists; where, too, dueling parties not unfrequently breakfasted before proceeding to the ground, and where they sometimes returned to invigorate their restored friendship with the landlord's wine. A short distance above the ground, lived a fine-hearted old Captain, who, if he got scent of a duel, would rush to the place, throw himself between the combatants, and never give over persuading and threatening till he had established a peace or a truce between them. He was the owner of the ground, and spoke with authority. He never ceased to think that, if on this fatal morning, he had observed the approach of the boats, he could have prevented the subsequent catastrophe.

But, for the very purpose of preventing suspicion, it had

been arranged that Colonel Burr's boat should arrive some time before the other. About half-past six, Burr and Van Ness landed, and leaving their boat a few yards down the river, ascended over the rocks to the appointed place. It was a warm, bright, July morning. The sun looks down, directly after rising, upon the Weehawken heights, and it was for that reason that the two men removed their coats before the arrival of the other party. There they stood carelessly breaking away the branches of the underwood, and looking out upon as fair, as various, as animated, as beautiful a scene, as mortal eyes in this beautiful world ever behold. The haze-crowned city; the bright, broad, flashing, tranquil river; the long reach of waters, twelve miles or more, down to the Narrows; the vessels at anchor in the harbor; misty, blue Staten Island, swelling up in superb contour from the lower bay; the verdant flowery heights around; the opposite shore of the river, then dark with forest, or bright with sloping lawn; and, to complete the picture, that remarkably picturesque promontory called Castle Point, that bends out far into the stream, a mile below Weehawken, and adds a peculiar beauty to the foreground; — all these combine to form a view, one glance at which *ought* to have sent shame and horror to the duelist's heart, that so much as the thought of closing a human being's eyes for ever on so much loveliness, had ever lived a moment in his bosom.

Hamilton's boat was seen to approach. A few minutes before seven it touched the rocks, and Hamilton and his second ascended. The principals and seconds exchanged the usual salutations, and the seconds proceeded immediately to make the usual preparations. They measured ten full paces; then cast lots for the choice of position, and to decide who should give the word. The lot, in both cases, fell to General Hamilton's second, who chose the *upper* end of the ledge for his principal, which, at that hour of the day, could not have been the best, for the reason that the morning sun, and the flashing of the river, would both interfere with the sight. The pistols were then loaded, and the principals placed, Hamilton looking over the river toward the city, and Burr turned toward the

heights, under which they stood. As Pendleton gave Hamilton his pistol, he asked,

"Will you have the hair-spring set?"

"*Not this time*," was the quiet reply.

Pendleton then explained to both principals the rules which had been agreed upon with regard to the firing; after the word *present*, they were to fire as soon as they pleased. The seconds then withdrew to the usual distance.

"Are you ready," said Pendleton.

Both answered in the affirmative. A moment's pause ensued. The word was given. Burr raised his pistol, took aim, and fired. Hamilton sprang upon his toes with a convulsive movement, reeled a little toward the heights, at which moment he involuntarily discharged his pistol, and then fell forward headlong upon his face, and remained motionless on the ground. His ball rustled among the branches, seven feet above the head of his antagonist, and four feet wide of him. Burr heard it, looked up, and saw where it had severed a twig. Looking at Hamilton, he beheld him falling, and sprang toward him with an expression of pain upon his face. But at the report of the pistols, Dr. Hosack, Mr. Davis, and the boatman, hurried anxiously up the rocks to the scene of the duel; and Van Ness, with presence of mind, seized Burr, shielded him from observation with an umbrella, and urged him down the steep to the boat. It was pushed off immediately, and rowed swiftly back to Richmond Hill, where Swartwout, with feelings that may be imagined, received his unhurt chief — a chief no more!

Mr. Pendleton raised his prostrate friend. Dr. Hosack found him sitting on the grass, supported in the arms of his second, with the ghastliness of death upon his countenance. "This is a mortal wound, doctor," he gasped; and then sunk away into a swoon. The doctor stripped up his clothes, and saw at a glance that the ball, which had entered his right side, must have penetrated a mortal part. Scarcely expecting him to revive, they conveyed him down among the large rocks, to the shore, placed him tenderly in the boat, and set off for the city. The doctor now used the usual restoratives, and the

wounded man gradually revived. "He breathed," to quote the doctor's words; "his eyes, hardly opened, wandered without fixing upon any object; to our great joy, he at length spoke. 'My vision is indistinct,' were his first words. His pulse became more perceptible, his respiration more regular, his sight returned. Soon after recovering his sight, he happened to cast his eye upon the case of pistols, and observing the one that he had had in his hand lying on the outside, he said, 'Take care of that pistol; it is undischarged and still cocked; it may go off and do harm. Pendleton knows' (attempting to turn his head toward him) 'that I did not intend to fire at him.'

"Then he lay tranquil till he saw that the boat was approaching the wharf. He said, 'Let Mrs. Hamilton be immediately sent for; let the event be gradually broke to her, but give her hopes.' Looking up we saw his friend, Mr. Bayard, standing on the wharf in great agitation. He had been told by his servant that General Hamilton, Mr. Pendleton, and myself had crossed the river in a boat together, and too well he conjectured the fatal errand, and foreboded the dreadful result. Perceiving, as we came nearer, that Mr. Pendleton and myself only sat up in the stern sheets, he clasped his hands together in the most violent apprehension; but when I called to him to have a cot prepared, and he at the same moment saw his poor friend lying in the bottom of the boat, he threw up his eyes, and burst into a flood of tears and lamentation. Hamilton alone appeared tranquil and composed. We then conveyed him as tenderly as possible up to the house.* The distress of his amiable family were such that, till the first shock had abated, they were scarcely able to summon fortitude enough to yield sufficient assistance to their dying friend.'"

By nine in the morning the news began to be noised about in the city. A bulletin soon appeared on the board at the Tontine Coffee House, and the pulse of the town stood still at the shocking intelligence. People started and turned pale as they read the brief announcement:

* Hamilton's town residence was 52 Cedar-street; Burr's, 30 Partition-street (now Fulton). Bayard's house, to which Hamilton was taken, was at Greenwich, within half a mile of Richmond Hill.

"GENERAL HAMILTON WAS SHOT BY COLONEL BURR THIS MORNING IN A DUEL. THE GENERAL IS SAID TO BE MORTALLY WOUNDED."

Bulletins, hourly changed, kept the city in agitation. All the circumstances of the catastrophe were told, and retold, and exaggerated at every corner. The thrilling scenes that were passing at the bedside of the dying man — the consultations of the physicians — the arrival of the stricken family — Mrs. Hamilton's overwhelming sorrow — the resignation and calm dignity of the illustrious sufferer — his broken slumbers during the night — the piteous spectacle of the *seven* children entering together the awful apartment — the single look the dying father gave them before he closed his eyes — were all described with amplifications, and produced an impression that can only be imagined. He lingered thirty-one hours. The duel was fought on Wednesday morning. At two o'clock, on Thursday afternoon, Hamilton died.

A notice was immediately posted for a meeting of the merchants, at the Tontine Coffeè House, that evening; when they resolved to close their stores on the day of the funeral, to order all the flags of the shipping at half mast, and to wear crape for thirty days. The bar met next morning, and agreed to go into mourning for six weeks. The military companies, the students of Columbia College, the Tammany Society, the Cincinnati, the St. Andrew's Society, the General Society of Mechanics, the Corporation of the city, all passed resolutions of sorrow and condolence, and agreed to attend the funeral. On Saturday, the funeral took place. Business was utterly suspended. The concourse in the streets was unprecedented. The cortége comprised all the magnates of the city, and nearly every body of men that had a corporate existence. The friends and partisans of Colonel Burr made it a point to testify, by their presence in the procession, that they shared in the general respect for the fallen statesman, and in the general sorrow at his untimely end. While the procession was moving, the minute-guns of the artillery in the Park and at the Battery, were answered by minute guns from a British frigate, the British packet, and two French men-of-war that lay at

anchor in the harbor. For two hours, the booming of so many guns deepened the melancholy of the occasion. Governor Morris, on a platform at Trinity Church, pronounced a brief eulogium, which penetrated every heart; for on the same platform stood the four sons of the departed, the eldest sixteen, the youngest, four.

The newspapers, everywhere, broke into declamation upon these sad events. I suppose that the "poems," the "elegies," and the "lines," which they suggested would fill a duodecimo volume of the size usually appropriated to verse. In the chief cities, the character of the deceased was made the subject of formal eulogium. The popular sympathy was recorded indelibly upon the ever-forming map of the United States, which bears the name of Hamilton forty times repeated.

The funeral solemnities over, the public feeling took the character of indignation against the immediate author of all this sorrow and ruin. In a few days the correspondence was published, and from that hour *Burr* became, in the general estimation of the people, a name of horror. Those preliminary letters, read by a person ignorant of the former history of the two men, are entirely damning to the memory of the challenger. They present Burr in the light of a revengeful demon, burning for an innocent victim's blood. Read aright — read by one who knows intimately what had gone before — read by one who is able to perceive that the moral quality of a duel is not affected by its results — read, too, in the light of half a century ago — and the challenge will be admitted to be as near an approach to a reasonable and inevitable action, as an action can be which is intrinsically wrong and absurd. But not so thought the half-informed public of 1804. They clamored for a victim. The coroner's jury shared in the feeling which was, for the moment, all but universal, and after ten or twelve days of investigation, brought in a verdict to the effect, that "Aaron Burr, Esquire, Vice-President of the United States, was guilty of the murder of Alexander Hamilton, and that William P. Van Ness, and Nathaniel Pendleton were accessories." Mr. Davis and another gentleman, for refusing to testify, were committed to prison. The grand jury,

a few days after, instructed the district attorney to prosecute. The parties implicated fled, in amazement, rather than terror, from these unexampled proceedings.

Need it be told that Cheetham rose with the occasion, and surpassed himself? The fables he invented during the month following the duel have not been excelled since the love of scandal was implanted in the heart of man. Three of Burr's myrmidons, he said, had sat day and night, ransacking newspapers for the grounds of a challenge, and had borne Dr. Cooper's letter to their chief, exulting! Burr, he continued, had learned from a paragraph in the *Chronicle*, published ten days before the duel, that a girl in England, who had been shot in the breast, had escaped unharmed from the bullet's striking upon a silk handkerchief. Whereupon, says Cheetham, the valorous colonel orders a suit of silk clothes to fight in, and went to the field in an impenetrable panoply of silk. No, replied the *Chronicle*, his coat was of bombazine, and his pantaloons of cotton. Cheetham then called upon "the ingenious and philosophical Peter Irving," to favor the public with a disquisition upon the nature of bombazine, and, meanwhile, informs them that its woof is of silk, and its warp of mohair. A discussion on the fabric of the waistcoast runs through a few numbers of each paper. Cheetham further averred that while Hamilton lay dying, surrounded by his agonized family, Burr sat at table with his myrmidons drinking wine, and jocularly apologizing to them for not having shot his antagonist through the heart. Another of his inventions was, that Colonel Burr had, for three months, been at daily practice with the pistol, and had passed the morning of the 4th of July, before going to the banquet of the Cincinnati, in shooting at a mark in the grounds of Richmond Hill. The truth was, that Colonel Burr was inexpert with the pistol from *want* of practice. He was a fair shot, because he was fearless and self-possessed. A great shot he never was.

Such vitality may there be in lies planted at the right moment in the right place, and in the right manner, that these foolish tales have still a certain currency in the United States. Many old Federalists and Clintonians believe them, and think

it ignorance in one who does not. A poem, designed for Hamilton's monument, written a few months after the duel, speaks

> "Of persecuted greatness, that provoked
> The *practiced aim of Infamy.*"

All but the most devoted friends of Burr were overawed by the storm of popular indignation thus shamelessly stimulated. For two weeks, even the *Chronicle* was nearly silent. Then a short series of articles appeared palliating and excusing Burr's conduct. A pamphlet, signed "Lysander," was published in August, with the same object. There was a slight reaction, after the first month; and, gradually, a considerable number of the extreme Republicans came to regard with a certain complacency the man who had removed the great Federalist from the political field. In the Far West, and in some parts of the South, Burr gained a positive increase of popularity by the duel. But in the States where his chief strength had lain, and from which he may have hoped for future support against the Virginians, he sunk to a deeper deep of unpopularity than any American citizen has reached since Benedict Arnold's treason amazed the struggling nation.

This duel had the good effect of rousing the public mind of the free States to a sense of the execrableness of the practice of dueling. General C. C. Pinckney, Vice-President of the Cincinnati, proposed to the New York division, that the society should thenceforth set their faces resolutely against the practice. The legislature was memorialized for more stringent laws upon the subject, and the clergy were besought to denounce the murderous custom from the pulpit. A large number of them did so, among whom was Samuel Spring, of Newburyport, Burr's college friend, and fellow-adventurer at Quebec. Dr. Nott, then pastor of a Presbyterian church in Albany, now the venerable President of Union College, made the fall of Hamilton the subject of a sermon, which is still justly celebrated. As the strongest expression of feeling which the event elicited, I append here its concluding passages:

"*Guilty, absurd, and rash*, as dueling is, it has its advocates. And had it not had its advocates — had not a strange preponderance of opinion been in favor of it, never, O lamentable *Hamilton!* hadst thou thus fallen, in the midst of thy days, and before thou hadst reached the zenith of thy glory!

"O that I possessed the talent of eulogy, and that I might be permitted to indulge the tenderness of friendship in paying the last tribute to his memory! O that I were capable of placing this great man before you! Could I do this, I should furnish you with an argument, the most practical, the most plain, the most convincing, except that drawn from the mandate of God, that was ever furnished against dueling, that horrid practice, which has in an awful moment robbed the world of such exalted worth. * * *

"I know he had his failings. I see on the picture of his life, a picture rendered awful by greatness, and luminous by virtue, some dark shades. On these let the tear that pities human weakness fall; on these let the vail which covers human frailty rest. As a hero, as a statesman, as a patriot, he lived nobly: and would to God I could add, he nobly fell.

"Unwilling to admit his error in this respect, I go back to the period of discussion. I see him resisting the threatened interview. I imagine myself present in his chamber. Various reasons, for a time, seem to hold his determination in arrest. Various and moving objects pass before him, and speak a dissuasive language.

"His country, which may need his counsels to guide, and his arm to defend, utters her *veto*. The partner of his youth, already covered with weeds, and whose tears flow down into her bosom, intercedes! His babes, stretching out their little hands and pointing to a weeping mother, with lisping eloquence, but eloquence which reaches a parent's heart, cry out, 'Stay, stay, dear papa, and live for us!' In the mean time the specter of a fallen son, pale and ghastly, approaches, opens his bleeding bosom, and, as the harbinger of death, points to the yawning tomb, and warns a hesitating father of the issue.

"He pauses. Reviews these sad objects: and reasons on

the subject. I admire his magnanimity. I approve his reasoning, and I wait to hear him reject with indignation the murderous proposition, and to see him spurn from his presence the presumptuous bearer of it.

"But I wait in vain. It was a moment in which his great wisdom forsook him. A moment in which *Hamilton* was not himself.

"He yielded to the force of an imperious custom, and, yielding, he sacrificed a life in which all had an interest; — and he is lost — lost to his family — lost to us.

"For this act, because he disclaimed it, and was penitent, I forgive him. But there are those whom I can not forgive.

"I mean not his antagonist, over whose erring steps, if there be tears in heaven, a pious mother looks down and weeps. If he is capable of feeling, he suffers already all that humanity can suffer: suffers, and, wherever he may fly, will suffer, with the poignant recollection of having taken the life of one who was too magnanimous in return to attempt his own. Had he but known this, it must have paralyzed his arm while it pointed at so incorruptible a bosom the instrument of death. Does he know this now? his heart, if it be not adamant, must soften; if it be not ice, it must melt.—— But on this article I forbear. Stained with blood as he is, if he be penitent I forgive him; and if he be not, before these altars, where all of us appear as suppliants, I wish not to excite your vengeance, but rather, in behalf of an object rendered wretched and pitiable by crime, to wake your prayers.

* * * * * *

"Ah! ye tragic shores of Hoboken, crimsoned with the richest blood, I tremble at the crimes you record against us, the annual register of murders which you keep and send up to God! Place of inhuman cruelty! beyond the limits of reason, of duty, and of religion, where man assumes a more barbarous nature, and ceases to be man. What poignant, lingering sorrows do thy lawless combats occasion to surviving relatives!

"Ye who have hearts of pity, ye who have experienced the anguish of dissolving friendship, who have wept, and still

weep, over the moldering ruins of departed kindred, ye can enter into this reflection."

Not in vain did these words ring out with such emphasis from that Albany pulpit. The sermon was widely circulated and reached the national conscience. Since that day, no man, in the civilized States of this Union, has fought a duel without falling in the esteem of his countrymen. The custom is now abolished in those States, never to be revived.

A few months after the duel, the St. Andrew's Society of New York erected upon the spot where Hamilton, their president, fell, a marble monument, and surrounded it with an iron railing. For many years, while the monument stood, the place was visited by thousands of people in the course of every summer. It was never known by what irreverent hands the railing was first broken down, and the whole structure gradually removed; but, for thirty years past, no trace of the monument has existed on the ground which it commemorated. The slab which bore the inscription was preserved, until very recently, in an out-house of the mansion where resides the historical family who are proprietors of the spot. But, upon searching for it, two years ago, the steward of the estate discovered that even that last relic had disappeared in the same mysterious manner as the rest. At present there is not so much as a path leading to the scene of the death, and no one can find it, among those tangled and precipitous heights, without a guide.

CHAPTER XX.

THE FUGITIVE.

Burr's Conduct after the Duel — Anecdote — Burr's Flight — Commodore Truxton's Narrative — Burr Embarks secretly for St. Simon's — His Reception and Residence there — Banquet at Petersburg — Cheered at the Theater — His Return to Washington — He Presides at the Trial of Judge Chace — His Eloquent Farewell to the Senate — His Pecuniary Condition.

On the morning of the duel it chanced that one of Burr's cousins arrived in town from Connecticut, and made his way, about eight o'clock, to Richmond Hill. Alexis, the factotum of the establishment, obeyed his summons at the door, and showed him into the library, where he found Colonel Burr, alone, and engaged in his usual avocations. Burr received his young relative cordially, and, in every respect, as usual. Neither in his manner nor in his conversation was there any evidence of excitement or concern, nor any thing whatever to attract the notice of his guest. Except the master of the house, not a soul in Richmond Hill yet knew aught of that morning's work; nor indeed could it be said, in any sense of the word, that the master himself *knew* what he had done.

In a few minutes breakfast was announced, and the two gentlemen went to the dining-room and breakfasted together. The conversation was still quite in the ordinary strain, Burr inquiring after friends in the country, and the youth giving the information sought. After breakfast, the guest bade his host good-morning, and strolled off toward the city, which he reached about ten o'clock. As he walked down Broadway, he fancied he observed in passers-by the signs that something extraordinary had occurred or was expected. Near Wall-street, an acquaintance rushed up to him, breathless, and said,

"Colonel Burr has killed General Hamilton in a duel this morning."

"Why no he hasn't," replied the young gentleman, with the utmost positiveness, "I have just come from there and taken breakfast with him."

"But," replied the other, "I have this moment seen the news on the bulletin."

The cousin, reflecting for a moment on the absolute serenity of Burr's manner, and concluding that he would certainly have mentioned so interesting an occurrence if it had taken place, was still utterly incredulous, and, denouncing the report as false, went on his way. Before turning into Wall-street, he found the whole city astir, and soon had reason to suspect that the bulletin was only too true. So completely could Burr command his features and conceal his feelings.

Colonel Burr remained at or near Richmond Hill for eleven days after the duel. He was wholly unprepared for the excitement that arose. It never, before the duel, seemed once to have occurred to him that the public, which had seen with comparative indifference so many sanguinary conflicts of the kind, would discover any thing extraordinary in this one, whatever might be its result. He supposed, and had good reason to suppose, that, on the day before the duel, he was a more popular and a more important man than Hamilton. Was he not Vice-President? Had he not just been voted for by a majority of the freeholders of the city, in spite of Hamilton's most strenuous exertions? Yet, the day after the duel, the dying Hamilton had the heartfelt sympathy of every creature in the town, and Burr began to be regarded with abhorrence. "No one," said embittered John Adams, "wished to get rid of Hamilton in *that* way."

Soon after Hamilton died, Burr found it would be best for him to retire awhile from the scene of excitement. On Friday, he wrote thus to his son-in-law: "General Hamilton died yesterday. The malignant Federalists or Tories, and the embittered Clintonians, unite in endeavoring to excite public sympathy in his favor, and indignation against his antagonist. Thousands of absurd falsehoods are circulated with industry. The most illiberal means are practiced in order to produce excitement, and, for the moment, with effect.

"I propose leaving town for a few days, and meditate also a journey of some weeks, but whither is not resolved."

A week later, he wrote to the same person, that the duel had driven him into a sort of exile, and *might* terminate in an actual and permanent ostracism. "Our most unprincipled Jacobins," he continued, "are the loudest in their lamentations for the death of General Hamilton, whom, for many years, they have uniformly represented as the most detestable and unprincipled of men — the motives are obvious. Every sort of persecution is to be exercised against me. A coroner's jury will sit this evening, being the *fourth* time. The object of this unexampled measure is to obtain an inquest of murder. Upon this a warrant will be issued to apprehend me, and, if I should be taken, no bail would probably be allowed. You know enough of the temper and principles of the generality of the officers of our State government to form a judgment of my position.

"The statement (by Van Ness) in the *Morning Chronicle* was not submitted to my perusal, I being absent at the time of the publication. Several circumstances not very favorable to the deceased are suppressed; I presume, from holy reverence for the dead. I am waiting the report of this jury; when that is known, you shall be advised of my movements."

On Saturday evening (July 21st), a barge lay off a little wharf behind Richmond Hill. At ten o'clock, Burr, surrounded by a party of his friends, left his residence, and walked down to the river. The barge came alongside, when Burr, accompanied by his unswerving friend Swartwout, and a favorite servant, stepped on board. The boat was immediately pushed off, and its prow turned down the river. All night the bargemen plied their oars, while Burr and his companion lay in the stern, and, at intervals, slept. By nine o'clock on Sunday morning the boat was opposite the lawn of Commodore Truxton's residence at Perth Amboy, in New Jersey. What occurred there was related by the gallant commodore himself in a letter, which was published in the *Evening Post* a few days after.

"On Sunday morning," wrote Commodore Truxton, "be-

tween the hours of nine and ten o'clock, I was engaged in my study, when a servant came and said a gentleman wanted to see me. Supposing it to be one of my neighbors, I desired him to ask the gentleman to be seated in the drawing-room for a few minutes, and I would wait upon him. Soon after Mrs. Truxton came in, and told me it was the Vice-President. I immediately went down stairs, and a negro boy walked up to me, whom I did not at that moment recognize; he said that Colonel Burr was in a boat, and wished to see me. I went out, and discovered the boat that landed the boy laying off at a short distance from the shore, and the bargemen on their oars, keeping a position opposite to my landing-place.

"As soon as I approached near enough to the boat, the Vice-President and myself exchanged salutations. The boat then came in, when he landed immediately, as did Mr. Swartwout, whom he introduced me to, never having seen that gentleman before.

"In walking up to my house, the Vice-President told me they had been most of the night on the water, and a dish of good coffee would not come amiss. I told him it should be furnished with pleasure. As soon as we got on the piazza, I ordered breakfast, which was soon prepared, as the equipage of that meal was not yet removed below.

"After breakfast, Mr. Swartwout returned to New York, and the Vice-President asked me if horses were to be procured to take him on his journey further southward. Not believing, as it was Sunday (and as I was afterward informed), that he could be accommodated with convenience in this respect, I told him so, and that he must content himself where he was. On Monday morning, however, I ordered up my own horses and carriage, and took him to Cranberry, about twenty miles from this place, where he hired a carriage and horses to proceed with him to the Delaware, and I returned home. During the time Colonel Burr was with me, but little was said of the duel; delicacy on his part, as well as mine, prevented such conversation. He appeared to me to feel much more sorrow and regret than I have observed in any other person on the occasion, though I have seen many

who expressed unfeigned regret, and I was certain that they felt it.

"In conversation I took an opportunity of observing my own feelings on the subject, and that General Hamilton I had esteemed as an invaluable friend, statesman, and soldier; that as a politician, I admired him always, and, in fact, loved him as a brother. These expressions were made rather involuntarily, and I was sorry I made them, as they excited an increased emotion in the breast of Colonel Burr, which ought not to have been made by me, but it seemed unavoidable. I added, at the same time, that I had, and always had, an unfeigned and sincere regard for Colonel Burr, and that while I regretted the past event, I at the same time gave him a hearty welcome, as I should have done General Hamilton, had the fate of their interview been reversed, and he had made me a visit. I have taken time and pains to recollect and relate, as nearly verbatim as possible, every material expression on the subject, introduced in consequence of the unfortunate catastrophe, or that passed between us; and hope it will prevent any further misrepresentation, at least as far as you can prevent it.

"The difference of these two gents' political opinions, I could not but know; but notwithstanding this difference, I had often met them together when the demon of discord, in no instance, excited an expression or gesture in the one that could disturb the harmonious feelings of the other. But I always observed in both a disposition when together to make time agreeable, according to the end intended by such meetings in society, at the houses of each other, and of friends and it was never, until the unhappy affair of a duel was announced here, that I could have believed such a business was in contemplation between those gentlemen.

"No man, sir, can lament this sad event more sincerely than I do; and particularly since I have examined the correspondence and other papers on the subject. But let the melancholy lesson teach the inconsiderate that while any gentleman may express his opinion of men and things as he pleases, whether by letter or otherwise, under his own responsibility,

that he should be cautious how he implicates or commits others; who in good faith, perhaps, and in private conversation, communicate sentiments never intended for the public ear. That such conversations daily happen among gentlemen, there can be no doubt; but for the honor of society, they are but seldom promulgated to the world without permission, or by some uncommon accident."

From Cranberry, Colonel Burr was conveyed in a light wagon to the ferry at Bristol, whence he crossed into Pennsylvania, and so, by back roads, made his way, *incog.*, to Philadelphia. News traveled slowly at that day. At a tavern in Pennsylvania, the landlord, who knew the fugitive, accosted him by name, but was immediately silenced, and put on his guard. Burr found that the duel, which had been fought thirteen days before, had not yet been heard of in the village. Reaching Philadelphia in safety, he was welcomed to the house of his old friend, Dallas, and, at once, appeared in the streets, on foot and on horseback, exactly as if nothing was the matter; or, to use the language of the *Trenton Federalist*, "he had the hardihood to show himself in the streets." A slight indisposition having withdrawn him from public observation, for a day or two, he was reported to be dangerously sick. "What!" exclaimed the pious Cheetham, "has the vengeance of God overtaken him so soon?"

The last days of July wore away, and Burr was still waiting to hear the result of the coroner's inquest. This was not rendered till the 2d of August, at two o'clock in the morning. John Swartwout immediately dispatched an express to Van Ness who was secreted in the country, and to Burr at Philadelphia. He added, that the excitement was subsiding in New York, and that Burr's old friends were "rapidly traveling back to 1800. Governor Lewis," he said, "speaks of the proceedings openly as disgraceful, illiberal, and ungentlemanly. In short, a little more noise on their side, and a little further magnanimity on ours, is all that is necessary. In all this bustle, judicious men see nothing but the workings of the meanest passions."

Warrants were immediately issued for the arrest of the

principal and the two seconds. Burr foresaw that, in the present state of the public mind, Governor Lewis would be compelled to demand his surrender from the Governor of Pennsylvania, who would be obliged to order his arrest. In this extremity, he offered to surrender on condition of receiving a guaranty that he should be released on bail. This could not be. In the midst of a pleasant renewal of his flirtation with Celeste, which promised now to have a serious issue, he was compelled to make preparations for an immediate flight. "If any male friend of yours," he wrote to his daughter, "should be dying of *ennui*, recommend to him to engage in a duel and a courtship at the same time." He tells her that the stories afloat in the papers of attempts to assassinate him are all fables. "Those who wish me dead prefer to keep at a very respectful distance."

Had he no feeling, then? Did he not deplore the domestic ruin which the duel had caused? The reader who desires to be as just to an execrated as to an honored name, will give due weight to the circumstances of the man. Before the better feelings of the heart had time to wake, he became himself an object of what he thought persecution, and persecution set on foot by political enemies for party purposes. Even John Adams thought that the prodigious demonstrations of respect and sorrow which the death of Hamilton elicited, were paid to the *Federalist* more than to the *man*. It was, moreover, one of the ruling principles of Burr's life, inculcated by word and example, to make little of life's miseries, and much of its pleasures. The man who made that wife a widow, and those children fatherless, was not, as he thought, Aaron Burr, but Alexander Hamilton; and if a similar or equal bereavement had occurred to himself, he would have accepted the inevitable stroke, and gone on his way silent and composed. He always made light of such unavoidable calamities as death. A letter which he wrote during one of the yellow-fever periods in New York, began like this: "We die reasonably fast. Mrs. Jones died last night; but then Mrs. Smith had twins this morning; so the account is even." This soldierly hard-

ness of character he cultivated, and recommended, and, perhaps, sometimes *affected.*

The charitable mind that reflects upon this duel will curse anew that wretched system of morals which puts Honor for Honesty, and Pride for Principle; but will not too severely condemn the man who, in common with thousands of the brightest spirits of his time and country, received that system for lack of a better, and lived up to it—to his ruin.

About the middle of August, Colonel Burr, accompanied by Samuel Swartwout (a younger brother of the indomitable John), and attended by his favorite slave, Peter, a good-humored blunderer of fifteen, secretly embarked for St. Simon's, an island off the coast of Georgia, then the residence of a few wealthy planters. He had old friends upon this island, and the arrival of a Vice-President was itself an event to excite the few inhabitants of a place so remote from the great world. He was welcomed, on his arrival, to a mansion luxurious and hospitable, and the resources of the island were placed at his disposal. He was serenaded by the island's only band of music. He saw no more averted faces and lowering brows, and heard no more muttered execrations, as he passed. His southern friends, he found, had very different feelings with regard to the duel from the people at the North, and the society of St. Simon's bestowed every mark of consideration upon him that hospitable minds could suggest. "You have no idea," he wrote to Theodosia, "of the zeal and animation, of the intrepidity and frankness, with which Major Butler (his host) avowed and maintained — but I forget that this letter goes to Savannah by a negro, who has to swim half a dozen creeks, in one of which, *at least*, it is probable he may drown, and that, if he escape drowning, various other accidents may bring it to you through the newspapers, and then how many enemies might my indiscretion create for a man who had the sensibility and the honor to feel and to judge, and the firmness to avow —."

After a month's detention at St. Simon's by the devastations of a hurricane, he crossed to the main land, and made his way, with immense difficulties, traveling four hundred miles of the

distance in an open canoe, to his daughter's home in South Carolina. He was almost black from exposure when he arrived. Theodosia had passionately longed for his coming. She and her husband were devoted to him, believed in him utterly, and saw the late affair only with his eyes. Ten days of happy repose, and cordial, intimate intercourse, passed too swiftly. Then he set out on the long land-journey to Washington, where he was resolved to appear on the assembling of Congress, and perform his duty as President of the Senate.

At Petersburg, in Virginia, Burr was surprised by the warmth of his reception. The hot Republicans there, headed by a Mr. O'Keefe, renowned for the fury of his politics and of his temper (he afterward fell in a political duel) arranged a demonstration for the destroyer of the arch-foe of democracy. An invitation from the Republican citizens of the place to a public dinner, was communicated to Burr through the mayor, and couched in terms audaciously flattering, and intended to reflect on the contrary feeling that prevailed in the northern States. Burr accepted. The dinner was attended by fifty or sixty Republicans, who received, toasted, and listened to the Vice-President with enthusiasm. After dinner, twenty of the hilarious Democrats accompanied him to the theater, where the audience rose at his entrance and cheered. "Virginia," he wrote to his daughter, "is the last State, and Petersburg the last town in the State, in which I should have expected any open marks of hospitality and respect."

While these scenes were passing in Virginia, two other States were waiting to try him for murder. The duel having been fought in New Jersey, certain Federalists of that State succeeded, three months after, in getting Dr. Mason, one of the clergymen who had attended Hamilton, to give testimony on which to found an indictment. Burr was indicted accordingly. In New York, the evidence had been given by Bishop Moore, who administered the communion to the dying man. But for those two clergymen's second-hand testimony, there would never have existed a word of legal evidence that the duel had been fought.

On reaching Washington, he was greeted with the tidings

of this new indictment. "You have doubtless heard," he wrote to his daughter, "that there has subsisted for some time a contention of a very singular nature between the two States of New York and New Jersey. * * * The subject in dispute is, which shall have the honor of hanging the Vice-President. * * * You shall have due notice of time and place. Whenever it may be, you may rely on a grea' concourse of company, much gayety, and many rare sights."

But the question was never decided. Commodore Biddle and Attorney-General Dallas, wrote a joint letter to Governor Bloomfield of New Jersey, who was himself a particular friend of Burr's, urging him not to prosecute. The leading Republican Senators addressed a similar letter to the governor. It was soon understood, that though nothing favorable to Burr could be openly done, he should not be molested. Among the officials, and in the society of Washington, during his last winter there, he was received with, at least, as much consideration as before. The President seems to have been *more* complaisant than usual. He gave one or two appointments to Burr's particular friends, this winter. General Wilkinson was made governor of the newly-acquired territory of Louisiana, and Dr. Brown secretary; the latter appointment being certainly made at Burr's request.

For the exit of this "well-graced actor" from the drama of public life, an imposing pageant was preparing. The Senate, during this session, was to try Judge Chace, who had been impeached by the House of Representatives. Chace was a Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States, an able, prejudiced, arrogant man, who, it was charged, had grossly abused the authority of the bench in certain political trials. The impeachment created an intense interest, and the trial attracted a concourse of people to Washington. Under the direction of the Vice-President, the Senate Chamber was fitted up in superb style, with seats and subdivisions for all the dignitaries of the nation, as well as for foreign embassadors and spectators. The Senators, as judges of this high court, were placed in a grand semicircle, on each side of the Vice-President, an awful array of judicial authority. Temporary

galleries were erected, and draped with blue cloth, part of which the Vice-President, with his usual gallantry, appropriated to the ladies. The scene presented, while the trial was in progress, as described minutely in the papers of the day, must have been extremely striking.

The trial began on the 4th of February, and ended, in a verdict of acquittal, on the 1st of March. The dignity, the grace, the fairness, the prompt, intelligent decision with which the Vice-President presided over the august court, extorted praise even from his enemies. "He conducted the trial," said a newspaper of the day, "with the dignity and impartiality of an angel, but with the rigor of a devil." There was a rising tide of reaction in his favor, during the closing days of his public life, which, taken at the flood, might have led, if not to fortune, yet to an endurable existence among his countrymen.

The day after the conclusion of the trial, the Vice-President took formal leave of the Senate, in a speech which produced an unexpected and profound sensation. I find an imperfect report of it copied into Federal and Republican papers of the time, and in a monthly magazine published in New York. It appeared, also, in European papers, both English and continental; for the late events had made the names of Hamilton and Burr familiar to the whole world. The *Washington Federalist* gave the original report, which was prepared, at the editor's request, by an unknown hand. The following is a copy:

"On Saturday, the 2d of March, 1805," began the reporter, "Mr. Burr took leave of the Senate. This was done at a time when the doors were closed; the Senate being engaged in executive business, and, of course, there were no spectators. It is, however, said to be the most dignified, sublime, and impressive that ever was uttered; and the effect which it produced justifies these epithets. I will give you the best account I have been able to obtain, from the relation of several Senators, as well Federal as Republican.

"Mr. Burr began by saying that he had intended to pass the day with them, but the increase of a slight indisposition

had determined him then to take leave of them. He touched lightly on some of the rules and orders of the House, and recommended, in one or two points, alterations, of which he briefly explained the reasons and principles.

"He said he was sensible he must at times have wounded the feelings of individual members. He had ever avoided entering into explanations at the time, because a moment of irritation was not a moment for explanation; because his position (being in the chair) rendered it impossible to enter into explanation, without obvious danger of consequences which might hazard the dignity of the Senate, or prove disagreeable and injurious in more than one point of view; that he had, therefore, preferred to leave to their reflections his justification; that, on his part, he had no injuries to complain of: if any had been done or attempted, he was ignorant of the authors; and if he had ever heard he had forgotten, for, he thanked God, he had no memory for injuries.

"He doubted not but that they had found occasion to observe that to be prompt was not therefore to be precipitate; and that to act without delay was not always to act without reflection; that error was often to be preferred to indecision; that his errors, whatever they might have been, were those of rule and principle, and not of caprice; that it could not be deemed arrogance in him to say that, in his official conduct, he had known no party — no cause — no friend; that if, in the opinion of any, the discipline which had been established approached to rigor, they would at least admit that it was uniform and indiscriminate.

"He further remarked, that the ignorant and unthinking affected to treat as unnecessary and fastidious a rigid attention to rules and decorum; but he thought nothing trivial which touched, however remotely, the dignity of that body; and he appealed to their experience for the justice of this sentiment, and urged them in language the most impressive, and in a manner the most commanding, to avoid the smallest relaxation of the habits which he had endeavored to inculcate and establish.

"But he challenged their attention to considerations more

momentous than any which regarded merely their personal honor and character — the preservation of law, of liberty, and the Constitution. This House, said he, is a sanctuary ; a citadel of law, of order, and of liberty; and it is here — it is here, in this exalted refuge — here, if any where, will resistance be made to the storms of political frenzy and the silent arts of corruption ; and if the Constitution be destined ever to perish by the sacrilegious hands of the demagogue or the usurper, which God avert, its expiring agonies will be witnessed on this floor.

" He then adverted to those affecting sentiments which attended a final separation — a dissolution, perhaps for ever, of those associations which he hoped had been mutually satisfactory. He consoled himself, however, and them, with the reflection that, though they separated, they would be engaged in the common cause of disseminating principles of freedom and social order. He should always regard the proceedings of that body with interest and with solicitude. He should feel for their honor and the national honor so intimately connected with it, and took his leave with expressions of personal respect, and with prayers and wishes.

" In this cold relation a distant reader, especially one to whom Colonel Burr is not personally known, will be at a loss to discover the cause of those extraordinary emotions which were excited. The whole Senate were in tears, and so unmanned that it was half an hour before they could recover themselves sufficiently to come to order, and choose a Vice-President *pro tem.*

" At the President's, on Monday, two of the Senators were relating these circumstances to a circle which had collected round them. One said that he wished that the tradition might be preserved as one of the most extraordinary events he had ever witnessed. Another Senator being asked, on the day following that on which Mr. Burr took his leave, how long he was speaking, after a moment's pause, said he could form no idea ; it might have been an hour, and it might have been but a moment; when he came to his senses, he seemed to have awakened as from a kind of trance.

"The characteristics of the Vice-President's manner seemed to have been elevation and dignity — a consciousness of superiority. Nothing of that whining adulation; those canting, hypocritical complaints of want of talents; assurance of his endeavors to please them; hopes of their favor, etc. On the contrary, he told them explicitly that he had determined to pursue a conduct which his judgment should approve, and which should secure the suffrage of his own conscience, and that he had never considered who else might be pleased or displeased; although it was but justice on this occasion to thank them for their deference and respect to his official conduct — the constant and uniform support he had received from every member — for their prompt acquiescence in his decisions; and to remark, to their honor, that they had never descended to a single motion of passion or embarrassment; and so far was he from apologizing for his defects, that he told them that, on reviewing the decisions he had had occasion to make, there was no one which, on reflection, he was disposed to vary or retract.

"As soon as the Senate could compose themselves sufficiently to choose a President *pro tem.*, they came to the following resolution:

"Resolved, unanimously, That the thanks of the Senate be presented to *Aaron Burr*, in testimony of the impartiality, dignity, and ability, with which he has presided over their deliberations, and of their entire approbation of his conduct in the discharge of the arduous and important duties assigned him as President of the Senate; and that Mr. Smith, of Maryland, and Mr. White, be a committee to wait on him with this resolution.

"To which resolution Colonel Burr returned the following answer to the Senate:

"Next to the satisfaction arising from a consciousness of having discharged my duty, is that which is derived from the approbation of those who have been the constant witnesses of my conduct, and the value of this testimony of their esteem is greatly enhanced by the promptitude and unanimity with which it is offered.

"I pray you to accept my respectful acknowledgments, and the assurance of my inviolable attachment to the interests and dignity of the Senate."

In remarking upon this report, Burr wrote: "It is true, that I made a talk, as was decent and proper, to the Senate on leaving them formally. There was nothing written or prepared, except that it had been some days on my mind to say something. It was the solemnity, the anxiety, the expectation, and the interest which I saw strongly painted in the countenances of the auditors, that inspired whatever was said. I neither shed tears nor assumed tenderness; but tears did flow abundantly. The story in this newspaper is rather awkwardly and pompously told. It has been gathered up, I presume, from different relations of the facts. This newspaper has been for months past, and, for aught I know (for I read none of them), still is, one of the most abusive against A. Burr."

Some of the Senators were not long in regaining their composure; for the usual resolution granting a perpetuity of the franking privilege to the retiring Vice-President, was not passed unanimously — as such resolutions generally are. It was doubtful, for a time, whether it would pass at all; but was finally passed by a vote of 18 to 13.

On the 4th of March, Jefferson, with the acclamations of a party, that was then almost *the nation*, was sworn, a second time, into the presidential office. George Clinton, the head of the family whom Burr regarded as his chief enemies, became Vice-President. Aaron Burr vanished from the political arena, never to re-appear thereon, except in the persons of those whom he formed and influenced, and through whom, a quarter of a century later, he overturned the Virginian dynasty.

During his absence at the South, Richmond Hill had been forced to a sale for twenty-five thousand dollars, and the amount appropriated to the payment of his debts. The sum realized was not enough; he still owed between seven and eight thousand dollars in the city, for which his *person* would be liable if he should appear there. A few thousands were owed to him, which, as affairs then stood, could not be col-

lected. His library and wine were still unsold. Probably, if a balance had been struck, it would have been found that he was about five thousand dollars less than solvent; but, in effect, he was worse off than that; for his debts were unequivocal, his assets unavailable, his income nothing, his practice gone, his native and his adopted States both closed upon him. He was what is commonly called a ruined man.

"In New York," he wrote to his son-in-law, "I am to be disfranchised, and in New Jersey hanged. Having substantial objections to both, I shall not, for the present, hazard either, but shall seek another country. You will not, from this, conclude that I have become passive, or disposed to submit tamely to the machinations of a banditti. If you should you would greatly err. ——— and his clan affect to deplore, but secretly rejoice at and stimulate the villainies of all sorts which are practiced against me. Their alarm and anxiety, however, are palpable to a degree perfectly ridiculous. Their awkward attempt to propitiate reminds one of the Indian worship of the evil spirit. God bless you ever."

He was full of confidence in himself and hope for the future. Many of his old friends went from New York to Philadelphia on purpose to visit him, after his return from Washington, and they found him the same gay, busy, indomitable Burr they had known in the palmiest days of his past career.

What next, then? Ay, What next?

Every lover of gossip in the United States, or, in other words, every sane inhabitant of the United States, was asking this question in the spring of 1805. What will Burr do now? Where will he go? For ten years past, he had filled a large place in the public view, and recent events had fixed all eyes upon him. In every part of the country, he had strong personal friends, men who had supported and worked hard for him in hotly-contested campaigns — women who had loved his black eyes, and thought him a knight without fear and without reproach. His portrait hung upon walls, his bust stood upon mantels. Always a man of whom anecdotes were told, he was now the subject of a thousand preposterous rumors, and the hero of a thousand groundless or exaggerated tales.

He was regarded as a *mysterious* being, a man of unfathomable purposes, and able to bend all things and persons to his will. The public mind was prepared to believe any thing of Burr, provided only that it was sufficiently incredible!

The reader is entreated to give due consideration to the fact just mentioned, for it is a clew which may guide us through the laybrinth we are about to attempt. I have groped in it long, as others have before me. It is tortuous and heaped with falsehoods, as surely no other 'passage' of history ever was before. I invite the reader to enter, and follow the path which lead me to — what looks like daylight.

CHAPTER XXI.

HE SEEKS A NEW COUNTRY.

Louisiana Ours — Burr's Friends in the Western Country — General Wilkinson — The Great West in 1805 — Burr goes West — Narrative of Matthew Lyon — The Voyage down the Ohio — Blennerhassett Island — Grand Reception at Nashville — Arrival in New Orleans — New Orleans then — His Life there — Return Eastward — Burr suspected by the Spaniards — Journey through Kentucky — Letter of Clark to Wilkinson — Interview Between Wilkinson and Burr — Mysterious Letter from Burr to Wilkinson — Correspondence Between Burr and Blennerhassett — Interview Between Burr and Jefferson — Further Spanish Agoressions.

On Monday the 29th of December, 1803, at noon, the tri-colored flag of France, which floated from the staff in the public square of New Orleans, and upon which the eyes of expectant thousands were fixed, began to descend. At the same moment, the stars and stripes of the American Union appeared above the crowd, and slowly mounted the staff. Midway, the two standards met, and, for a minute or two, were lost in each other's friendly folds. Then, amid the thunders of cannon, the music of Hail Columbia, the cheers of the spectators, the waving of handkerchiefs and banners, the tri-color continued its descent to the ground, and the flag of the United States soared rapidly aloft, and flung out its folds to the breeze on the summit of the mast.

Louisiana was ours! The mouths of the Mississippi were free! The prosperity of the great valley was secure! The tide of emigration, for sixteen years held in check by the intolerance of the Spaniards, was now free to pour itself into the most productive region of the earth! The insolence of the Dons, whom every western man had learned to despise and detest, was signally rebuked!

Colonel Burr, now without a country, was one of the thousands who were looking westward, as the scene of a new

career. He was resolved, at least, to see the region which seemed to present to men of energy such boundless opportunities. He had many friends at the West — old army acquaintances, members of Congress with whom he had acted, Senators over whom he had presided. In 1796, when the Federalists had delayed the admission of Tennessee into the Union, Burr had been zealous in her cause, and thereby won great popularity in the new State. General Jackson had appeared on the scene as her representative in Congress; "a tall, lank, uncouth-looking personage, with long locks of hair hanging over his face, and a queue down his back tied in an eel-skin; his dress singular, his manners and deportment those of a rough backwoodsman."* With him, it was natural that Burr should become intimate. Dayton, formerly Speaker of the House, recently a Senator from New Jersey, a near relative of Burr's old Elizabethtown friend, Matthew Ogden, went westward in the spring of 1805. John Smith, a self-made man of spirit and talent, lately a Senator from Ohio, now one of the chief men of that vigorous young State, was another of Burr's friends. Matthew Lyon, a noted ultra Democrat of that day, who had been estranged from Burr during the two intrigues of 1801, but was now well-disposed toward him because he thought him a persecuted man, had also removed to the far West. All over the valley of the Mississippi, there were men who resented the late proceedings in New York and New Jersey, and were ready to go all lengths in showing respect to a man whom they regarded in the light of a martyr to Federal machinations and puritanic bigotry.

Burr's oldest friend in the West was General Wilkinson, commander-in-chief of the army, and recently appointed Governor of Louisiana. Wilkinson and Burr had climbed together the heights of Quebec, and formed, amid those scenes, the friendship which fellow-soldiers know. They had seldom met since, but had corresponded, confidentially and in cipher, at intervals, for many years. In 1787, Wilkinson had emigrated to New Orleans, then a Spanish port, where, till 1791,

* Recollections of Albert Gallatin, quoted by Mr. Hildredth in his History of the United States.

he had traded in tobacco, a subject, by residence, of the King of Spain. Not prospering in trade, he resumed his military career in 1791, and obtained command of the western posts.

The character of this man was not unblemished. It is certain that he was extravagant, fond of the table, fond of show, boastful, and otherwise weak. It was Wilkinson, the reader may remember, who, as aid-de-camp to Gates in 1777, *blabbed* to Lord Stirling an expression used by Conway to Gates, disparaging the generalship of Washington, which led to Conway's ruin, and to much other embarrassment and difficulty. There is strong (but not convincing) evidence, that while holding a commission in the American army, he had been a pensioner of the King of Spain. There was a party in the West, in 1796, who favored a separation of the western States from the Union. Wilkinson was of that party, and had dreams of leading the revolt, and becoming, to use his own words, "the Washington of the West." The Spanish viceroy favored a project calculated to weaken a neighbor that was growing portentously powerful, and of whom the home government was beginning to stand in dread. Unless the evidence on this point is flat perjury (which, indeed, it may be), Wilkinson was paid by the Spanish to promote the scheme, and drew up, for the viceroy, a list of the leading citizens of Kentucky known to be disaffected to the Union, who, he thought, would also accept money for the same purpose. Daniel Clark swears that he saw this list in Wilkinson's hand-writing, and that Wilkinson confessed, in effect, that he had been himself a pensioner.*

The reader must be reminded that, during the administration of John Adams, the Union, to backwoodsmen, had not the sacred charm it has since possessed. The noise of party contention filled the land. The Union, as Wilkinson himself

* There is a portrait of General Wilkinson in the Hall of Independence at Philadelphia, which represents him as a portly, red-faced individual, dressed in the blue and yellow uniform of the Revolution. The portrait confirms the impression, derived from the writings of the time, that he was a *bon vivant*, merry, extravagant, boastful — the last man for a conspirator, though of easy virtue enough.

said, seemed to hang together by a thread, which any moment might break. Western men could not but speculate upon the effect a disruption would have upon their own political condition. Wilkinson may have thought of hastening the catastrophe, of founding a western republic, and of becoming its Washington, without being, in any sense of the word, a traitor.

Nor, in 1805, was the great West quite content. The acquisition of Louisiana had reduced the malcontents to a very inconsiderable minority, but there were still those who were dissatisfied with the monopolizing of the great federal offices by the politicians of the East, and who thought it absurd and undesirable to be connected with a government whose capital was a two months' journey distant. Nine tenths of the people, however, though they may all have grumbled a little, were attached to the Union, were proud of its President, were fervently devoted to the democratic ideas which he had made familiar to their minds.

And now Aaron Burr was to traverse this magnificent domain. A variety of projects lay half-formed in his mind — projects of land speculation, of canal-making, of settling in some rising city of the West in the practice of the law, of beginning anew his political life as the representative of a new State in Congress. If more ambitious schemes agitated him, they were concealed; neither in his diary, nor in his voluminous correspondence, published or unpublished, is there the slightest reference to any but ordinary and legitimate objects during the year 1805. The project of getting himself elected a member of Congress, was not, it seems, his own idea. On this point we have the testimony of Matthew Lyon, who, when all the world was exculpating itself from participation in Burr's plans, wrote a graphic narrative of certain events which preceded Burr's departure for the land of promise. Amid the heaps of dull, false, and semi-false statements which the events of the following year called forth, this narrative of a disinterested witness is particularly interesting. I quote the material part of Mr. Lyon's deposition:

"Some time in the winter, 1805, coming one morning (to

Washington) from Alexandria, by way of the navy-yard, and passing by the house where General Wilkinson lived, he called on me to come in; after congratulating him on his appointment as governor, and some other conversation, Colonel Burr's name was mentioned. Colonel Burr had no claim to friendly attentions from me. I had no acquaintance with him before the contest concerning the presidential election. I had resisted the solicitations of my friends, who wished to introduce me to him in March, 1801, on account of his misconduct in that affair; yet when I saw him persecuted for what I considered no more than fair play among duelists, I advocated him; this brought about an acquaintance, by no means intimate. In the course of the conversation between the general and myself, we regretted the loss of so much talent as Colonel Burr possessed; we viewed him on the brink of a precipice, from which, in a few days, he must fall; from the second station in the nation, he must fall to that of a private citizen.

"The general entered warmly into his praise, and talked of a foreign embassy for him. This I assured him could not be obtained. The general then asked me if I could not think of something which would do for the little counselor? I replied, that he might very readily become a member of the Congress, which was to meet the coming winter, and in the state of parties, considering the éclât with which he was likely to leave the Senate, he might very probably be Speaker.

"The general was anxious to know how he could be elected to Congress. I explained. Let Colonel Burr mount his horse the 4th of March, and ride through Virginia to Tennessee, giving out that he intends settling at Nashville, in the practice of the law. Let him commence the practice, and fix himself a home there; his renconter with General Hamilton will not injure him. Let him attend the courts in that district. Let him in July next intimate to some of the numerous friends (his preëminent talents and suavity of manners will have made for him) that he would willingly serve the district in Congress. They will set the thing on foot, and he is sure to be elected; there is no constitutional bar in the way.

"As I finished this explanation, the general rose, and, in a

seeming ecstasy, clapped his hands on my shoulders, exclaiming with an oath, 'This will do! — it is a heavenly thought — worthy of him who thought it!' He rang the bell, ordered his boots, and said he would go instantly and inform the little counselor, and would call on me in the House in the course of two or three hours. He did so, and informed me he had, at Colonel Burr's request, made an appointment for me to call on him.

"I was punctual. Colonel Burr lived at Mr. Wheaton's, near the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue, not far from Rhoades's. It was in the evening. I knocked, or pulled the bell, several times, before a servant came, who informed me that Colonel Burr was not to be seen, he was engaged with company. I gave the servant my name, and directed him to go and tell Colonel Burr that I had called. Colonel Burr came, and invited me up stairs, and requested me to sit with Mrs. Wheaton half an hour, when he would be with me. In about three quarters of an hour he came, and apologized for his delay. I observed to him that he had a large company, among whom I recognized the voices of Generals Wilkinson and Dayton, although I had not heard of the latter gent's being in town. I hoped he had not hurried himself from them on account of seeing me; that I had been well entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Wheaton, and would have been so an hour or two longer, if he wished to remain with his company.

"Colonel Burr said the meeting was about some land concern in the western country; that they had gone as far as they could with it at that time; my coming had been no interruption; he was very glad to see me, and soon commenced on the subject of the coming election in Tennessee. I repeated what I said to General Wilkinson. He admitted the possibility of success in the course I pointed out; but did not seem to be so much enamored with the project as General Wilkinson. He said he was obliged on the 4th of March to go to Philadelphia; from thence he would go to Pittsburg, and thence to the western country by water. I offered him a passage in my boat from Pittsburg, if he should be there when I should have done my business on the Monongahela,

and descended to Pittsburg. I assured him, however, all chance of obtaining the election in Tennessee, would be jeopardised, if not lost, by such a delay. He told me he had ordered a boat prepared for him at Pittsburg, and he talked as if his business at Philadelphia was indispensable, as well as his voyage down the Ohio.

"In stating this conversation, I give the substance of all the other conversations I had that winter with Colonel Burr, at Washington, except that, in some of them, the embassy was talked of. He observed, that my friend Wilkinson thought I would be a proper person, in a blunt way, to mention it to the President. He asked me, if I dared tell the President that he ought to send Colonel Burr on the foreign embassy talked of? I told him very bluntly, I would not."

This ended the intercourse of the three friends in Washington. Lyon started homeward. About the 10th of April, Colonel Burr left Philadelphia for Pittsburg, where he arrived after nineteen days' riding.

The boat which he had ordered was ready, and on the following morning he found himself floating down the Ohio. His boat was a rude floating house, or ark, sixty feet long and fourteen wide, containing four apartments, a dining-room, a kitchen with fire-place, and two bed-rooms, all lighted by glass windows, and the whole covered by a roof, which served as a promenade deck. The cost of this commodious structure, he found, to his astonishment, was only a hundred and thirty-three dollars. Of propelling power it had none, but merely floated down the swift and winding stream, aided occasionally, and kept clear of snags and sand-banks, by a dexterous use of the pole. In the spring, the current of the Ohio rushes along with surprising swiftness, carrying with it an ark or raft eight miles an hour. It would be a resistless torrent at that season but for its innumerable bends. Along its whole course, hills steep, picturesque, and lofty, rise almost from the bed of the river, and pour their streams headlong into it, whenever the rain falls or the snow melts. For hundreds and hundreds of miles, this most monotonously beautiful of rivers winds and coils itself about among those never-varying, seldom-receding hills,

skirted by a narrow fringe of bottom lands. Those hills, soon to be "vine-clad," were then one forest; those bottoms, now smiling with farms, or disfigured by the shabbiest of towns and villages, were then destitute of inhabitants, for hundreds of miles at a stretch.

Colonel Burr was always a swift traveler. Lyon had nearly two days' start, but was overtaken by him in a day and a half. The two boats, in the social fashion of the time, were then lashed together, and floated in company for four days. Passed Wheeling on the 3d of April, a neat, pretty village, of sixty or eighty houses; where Burr observed several well-dressed women, who had the air of fashion and movements of "*you others* on the coast." Passed Marietta on the 5th; where he saw houses that would be called handsome anywhere. The leading gentlemen of the place called to offer civilities and hospitalities. The voyagers all walked several miles to see the mounds and other antiquities near Marietta, which quite puzzled the voyager in chief — as they have wiser men. At Marietta the two boats parted company, and Burr continued his voyage alone.

A few miles below Marietta, is the far-famed Blennerhassett Island. It is an island nearly three miles long, but so narrow that it contains less than three hundred acres of land. The river on each side is narrow enough to admit of conversation between the island and the shore. Beyond the river, on each side of it, swell aloft, like dark clouds, the picturesque hills of the Ohio, forest-covered and forest-crowned, shutting in the little island from all the world. Here it was that Harman Blennerhassett, an eccentric, romantic, idle, 'shiftless' Irishman, had contrived to expend forty thousand dollars (nearly all his fortune) in building a house of original ugliness, and in laying out grounds remotely resembling those of country houses in the old country. The picture of this celebrated mansion suggests, to one who has not read Mr. Wirt's oration upon it, the idea of a semicircular barracks. A fair-sized, very plain, two story wooden house, with curved wings of one story, the front connected into a whole by a piazza — is the brief description of this celebrated abode. The semicircular

BLENNERHASSETT'S HOUSE.

front was one hundred and four feet from tip to tip. A lawn surrounded with trees and encircled by a carriage road, lay in front of the house. Further off there were gardens, groves, fields, and bits of primeval wilderness; the whole forming a pleasant, but by no means a very sumptuous or beautiful, residence. After spending eight years in subduing the island wilderness, Mr. Blennerhassett still saw his work incomplete, and, what was worse, he was beginning to catch glimpses of the end of his purse.

Colonel Burr had heard vaguely that some eccentric foreigner lived upon this island, and, from curiosity only, landed, and moored his floating home to the shore. Learning that the lord of the isle was absent, he and his companion strolled about the grounds awhile, and was about leaving when Mrs. Blennerhassett sent a servant to invite the strangers to the house, as her husband would soon return. Burr replied by sending his card, and declining the invitation, as he said curiosity alone had induced him to land. The lady, upon learning the name of the stranger, came out to see him, and so pressingly invited him to stay, that he yielded, dined with the family, conversed with them till eleven in the evening, and then continued his voyage. Mrs. Blennerhassett was an energetic, accomplished, amiable woman, but not remarkable for beauty or style. She was exceedingly pleased with her visitor, and remained his fast, admiring friend, through all the long series of events that followed this first interview. Her husband was equally captivated.

Three hundred miles below is Cincinnati, then a town of fifteen hundred inhabitants (now two hundred thousand), which he reached in six days' floating. There he spent a day at the house of ex-Senator John Smith, and met his friend Dayton, whose fortunes were to be bound up with his own. From the chief people of the place, he received the attentions which had greeted him everywhere west of the Alleghanies.

At Louisville, then called the Falls of the Ohio, he again overtook Matthew Lyon. "There," continues Mr. Lyon, "I repeated to him that the delay he had made had ruined his prospect of election, as that prospect depended solely on

domestication. At the falls, he changed his flat for a small boat, which he ordered to Eddyville (where I live), and rode to Nashville.

"The newspapers described his arrival and reception there as one of the most magnificent parades that had ever been made at that place They contained lists of toasts, and great dinners given in honor of Colonel Burr, every body at and near Nashville seeming to be contending for the honor of having best treated or served Colonel Burr.

"This I had expected; and when Colonel Burr called on me, on his way from Nashville to his boat, I inquired if any thing had been said about the election. He answered, 'Not one word.' I observed that he ought to think no more of it. In answer, he said he had little doubt of being elected delegate from Orleans Territory, but he would choose to be a member, and insisted that I should write to a friend of mine (who had paid him the most marked attention) to see if the thing could be yet set afloat, and to inform him he would be a resident in Tennessee. At the time of the election, he requested me to communicate the answer to him at Natchez. I complied with his wishes, the answer I received being unfavorable to him."

Mr. Lyon adds, that what he did for Colonel Burr in the election, was done chiefly to oblige General Wilkinson. Being asked whether, in his opinion, Burr was sincere in desiring an election, Lyon replied: "No doubt he would have been sincerely rejoiced to have been elected." But he added, "There seemed too much mystery in his conduct. I suspected him to have other objects in view, through which I could not penetrate. These objects I then believed were known to General Wilkinson."

At Nashville, he was the guest of General Jackson, "one of those prompt, frank, ardent souls whom I love to meet," said Burr. He staid four days at Nashville. On the 3d of June, in an open boat provided by the general, he and his companion-secretary embarked; and floated down the Cumberland, two hundred and twenty miles, to its mouth, where they found the ark, and resumed their voyage down the Ohio.

Sixteen miles below the mouth of the Cumberland was Fort

Massac, a place of renown in the olden time, long one of the outposts of civilization. There he found General Wilkinson, on his way to his government, and spent four days with him. The subjects of their conferences at this time, Wilkinson says, were perfectly legitimate. Himself, Burr, Dayton, and others, he declares, were deep in the project of making a canal round the rapids of the Ohio, at Louisville; and this was much discussed between them whenever they met. Land speculations were also talked of, and, more than all, the scheme of getting Burr into Congress. Wilkinson gave him letters of introduction to his friends in New Orleans, and, to expedite his voyage, fitted him out "an elegant barge, sails, colors, and ten oars, with a sergeant and ten able, faithful hands."

The eight hundred miles from Fort Massac to Natchez, were accomplished in seven days. "Natchez," he wrote to his daughter, "is a town of three or four hundred houses; the inhabitants traders and mechanics, but surrounded by wealthy planters, among whom I have been entertained with great hospitality and taste. These planters are, many of them, men of education and refinement; live as well as yours, and have generally better houses. We are now going through a settled country, and during the residue of my voyage to New Orleans, about three hundred miles, I shall take breakfast and dinner each day at the house of some gentleman on shore. I take no letters of introduction; but, whenever I hear of any gentleman whose acquaintance or hospitalities I should desire, I send word that I am coming to see him, and have always met a most cordial reception."

June the 25th, sixty-seven days after leaving Philadelphia, the voyager, whose occasional delays had been more than made up by his rapidity when in motion, landed on the levee of New Orleans. He was strongly prepossessed in favor of the place. "I hear so many pleasant things of Orleans," he wrote to his daughter, "that I should certainly (if one half of them are verified on inspection) settle down there, were it not for Theodosia and her boy; *but these will control my fate.*"

The city then contained about nine thousand inhabitants. Three hundred sea-going vessels, and six hundred river flat-

boats arrived annually at its levees. Four forts, one at each angle of the city, half a mile apart, defended the city. Two of these were regularly-constructed fortresses, with fosse, glacis, and drawbridge. The two behind the city were stockades. Since the departure of the Spaniards these fortifications had been partly dismantled, but were capable, in a few weeks, of being restored to their original strength.* In 1805, the

* The following is a description of New Orleans under Spanish rule, from a "Journal of a Tour in Unsettled parts of North America in 1796 and 1797," by the late Francis Baily, F.R.S. It partly explains the hatred of the Spaniards which prevailed in the western country in the early time: "Their houses are generally built of wood, and boarded very plain in the inside, and made very open, that there may be a free circulation of air; consequently they avoid all the inconvenience and expense of paper, carpets, fires, curtains, and hangings of different kinds. The bedrooms are fitted up in the same plain style, and are furnished with nothing but a *hard-stuffed* bed, raised very much in the *middle*, and covered with a clean, white sheet; and over the whole there is a large gauze net (called a *bar*), which is intended as a defense against the mosquitoes, and serves tolerably well to keep off those tormenting creatures. *On* this sheet (spread upon the bed, and *under* the net) you lie down without any other covering, and (if it be summer-time) with the doors and windows open, so intolerable is the heat of the climate. During several days when I was here, the thermometer was at 117° in the shade. The dress of the inhabitants is also correspondent to the furniture of their houses: being clothed in the lightest manner possible, and every one in the manner which pleases him best, there is not (in these new countries) that strange propensity to ridicule every one who deviates from the forms which a more established society may have prescribed to itself; but every one, in this respect, 'doeth that which is right in his own eyes.' Some will wear the short linen jacket of the Americans, others, the long flowing gown, or the cloak of the Spaniards; some, the open trousers and naked collar; others, the more modern dress, of tight pantaloons and large cravats; some, with the white or black chip hat; others, with the beaver and *feathers*, after the manner of the Spaniards: and so in respect to all other minutiæ of dress. * * * There is but one printing press in the place, and that is made use of by the government only. The Spanish government is too jealous to suffer the inhabitants to have the free exercise of it; for, however strange it may appear, yet it is absolutely true that you can not even stick a paper against the wall (either to recover any thing lost, or to advertise any thing for sale) without its first having the signature of the governor, or his secretary attached to it: and on all those little bills which are stuck up at the corners of the streets you see the word 'Permitted' written by the governor or his agent. * * * As to the diversions of the place, they consist principally in billiards, of which

chief defense of the place was a volunteer corps of Americans and Creoles, commanded by Daniel Clark, the great merchant of the city, the founder of that prodigious fortune for which his daughter, Mrs. Gaines, has so long contended in the courts.

Daniel Clark had emigrated from England in 1786, and had grown in wealth with the ever-growing prosperity of the city. He had been ardent for the transfer of the province to the United States, was now the leader of the American party in New Orleans, and seemed to be a zealous friend of the Union. To him Colonel Burr presented the following letter of introduction from General Wilkinson:

"My Dear Sir: This will be delivered to you by Colonel Burr, whose worth you know well how to estimate. If the persecutions of a great and honorable man can give title to generous attentions, he has claims to all your civilities and all your services. You can not oblige me more than by such conduct, and I pledge my life to you it will not be misapplied. To him I refer you for many things improper to letter, and which he will not say to any other. I shall be at St. Louis in two weeks, and if you were there, we could open a mine, a commercial one at least. Let me hear from you. Farewell, do well, and believe me always your friend."

This epistle produced the effect desired. Burr became intimate with Clark, as with all the important persons of the place. He was received everywhere as *the great man!* Governor Claiborne (governor of Orleans Territory) gave him a grand dinner, which was attended by as distinguished a company as New Orleans could assemble. Banquet followed

there are several tables in the town. This practice I presume they have adopted from the Americans, who (in the southern part of that continent) follow this amusement very much. They have a playhouse, which is rather small. It consists of one row of boxes only, with an amphitheater in the middle, which is raised above the pit, and over the whole there is a gallery. The plays are performed in French, and they have a tolerable set of actors. The inhabitants are also musical, but this lies chiefly among the French. The gentlemen of the place often perform in the orchestra of the theater: in fact, there is no other music there but such as they obtain in this voluntary way."

banquet; fête succeeded fête; ball followed ball. The French air that surrounded every thing, the French manner and tone of society, were as pleasing as they were novel to the traveler. The days flew swiftly by. *A la Santé Madame Alston*, was the first toast at nearly every table. Even the Ursuline nuns sent him an address congratulating him upon his arrival; and, upon their receiving his polite reply, an invitation to visit their convent. He went. "The bishop conducted me to the cloister. We conversed, at first, through the grates; but presently I was admitted within, and I passed an hour with them, greatly to my satisfaction. None of that calm monotony which I expected. All was gayety, *wit*, and sprightliness. * * * At parting, I asked them to remember me in their prayers, which they all promised with great promptness and courtesy."

If Burr ever meant to settle at the West, in the practice of the law, it was this banqueting and lionizing, in my opinion, which made it (morally) impossible for him to execute that intention. He should have resolutely declined to appear in the West as a great personage. How could a man of Burr's cast of character, after figuring at the head of cavalcades, after shining at balls and banquets, the observed of all observers, smiled upon by ladies, toasted, cheered, and followed by men — how could he take a little office at Nashville or New Orleans, hang out a little tin sign, and subside into an ordinary attorney and counselor at law? A wise man could. But who is wise? There is no position in human life more embarrassing, or more likely to be corrupting, than that of a man who is compelled to move in the conspicuous and costly spheres without possessing the requisite sum *per annum!* To be a poor man is nothing — is the lot of nearly all the men that live. But a crownless *king*, a penniless prince, an ex-Vice-President, without home, country, employment, income — these are pitiable persons. They are dangerous, too. It is such who plan Boulogne expeditions, usurp thrones, start mad enterprises, and turn the world upside down.

Burr staid three weeks in New Orleans. Wilkinson said in his letter of introduction, that Burr would make communica-

tions to Clark which were "*improper to letter.*" What were they? Burr was not a person to waste three weeks in mere feasting and playing the great man. Wherever he was, whatever he was, he was *busy*. He had the quickest, most active mind that ever animated five feet six inches of mortality. It is certain that he did *something* at New Orleans during those three weeks. What?

The question has been answered, first, by Wilkinson in his ponderous Memoirs; secondly, by Clark in his angry octavo, entitled, "*Proofs of the Corruption of General James Wilkinson, and of his Connection with Aaron Burr;* thirdly, by Matthew L. Davis, speaking for Burr himself. Wilkinson says the reference in his letter of introduction, was simply to the election scheme. Clark declares that Burr confided nothing to him whatever. He says he liked Burr exceedingly, invited him to dinner, showed him every possible civility, but had not a syllable of confidential conversation with him. In the most positive and circumstantial manner, he denies that he had then, or ever had, any participation in, or knowledge of, Burr's designs.* Davis, on the contrary, asserts that Clark and Wilkinson were both ardently engaged with Burr; and that Clark agreed to advance fifty thousand dollars in furtherance of the great project. Other friends of Burr say that

* Clark's own comments on Wilkinson's letter are as follows: "The things which it was improper to *letter* to me are pretty plainly expressed in a communication made about the same time (by Wilkinson) to General Adair. The letter is dated, Rapids of Ohio, May 28th, 1805, 11 o'clock, and contains these expressions: — 'I was to have introduced my friend Burr to you, but in this I failed by accident. He understands your merits, and reckons on you. Repair to me and I will tell you *all*. We must have a peep at the unknown world beyond me.' The letter to me I think fully proves that some secret plan of Burr's was known to Wilkinson in May, 1805. That to General Adair leaves no doubt on the subject. Immediately after this he went to St. Louis, where his very first act, before he had broken bread in the territory, was an endeavor to bring Major Bruff into his plans. He tells him that he had a '*grand scheme*,' that 'would make the fortunes of all concerned;' and though Major Bruff's manner of receiving this overture put a stop to any further disclosure, yet we may judge of its nature, for it was introduced by a philippic against democracy, and the ingratitude of republican governments."

Clark made two voyages to Vera Cruz, to spy out the enemy's country. Clark admits having made the voyages (one in September, 1805, the other in February, 1806); admits having collected information in Mexico respecting the strength of the fortresses, the number of the garrisons, and the disposition of the people; but asserts that his voyages had none but commercial objects, and that his inquiries were only prompted by curiosity. A witness deposed to having heard Clark say, that he would willingly join in a private scheme for the conquest of Mexico, provided the adventurers could turn their backs for ever on the United States. "You, for example, might be a duke," was one expression which the witness swore he had heard Clark use in the course of the same conversation.

The difficulty of arriving at certainty on this subject arises from the fact, that most of the existing evidence was given *after* the explosion! It was amusing, says Burnet (in his "Notes"), to see men who *before* the President's proclamation appeared, had been loudest in Burr's praises, and deepest in his schemes, making haste, *after* that bolt had shivered the project to atoms, to denounce the traitor at every corner, and running to offer their services to the governor in defense of a distracted and imperiled country.

My own *impression*, after reading all the procurable documents, is, that neither Clark nor Wilkinson were really embarked in Burr's Mexican scheme; though both, up to a certain point, may have favored it. Nor do I think that, during this visit to New Orleans, Burr himself did more than collect information, and cast a very wistful eye across the river to the domain of the hated Spaniards, who still held the western bank of the Mississippi. Of all the men in the territory, Clark and Wilkinson were the best informed respecting the affairs of Mexico. Both had traded with the Dons. Wilkinson, for many a year, had indulged the dream of leading an army to the capital of the Montezumas, and had made minute inquiries respecting the routes. All these stores of information were freely poured into the ear of a man fond of adventure, habituated to distinction, and destitute of resources.

He could see for himself that the tie which bound the province of Louisiana to the Union was not strong. The French population, who had for a few months enjoyed a reunion with their mother country, and had hoped that that reunion would be perpetual, merely acquiesced in the recent cession. The Spaniards could not give up the hope of regaining the province.

Sixty years before, the map of what is now the United States, reflected glory chiefly upon the Spanish name. Except that along the Atlantic coast there appeared a narrow red stripe denoting the British colonies, that map was one expanse of green, the northern part of which was called Canada, the southern, Louisiana; and the whole was claimed by the French. A few years later, the latter province, embracing the most productive part of the valley of the Mississippi, and the mouth of the river, upon which the value of all the rest depended, was ceded to Spain. After half a century of possession, the Spaniards had lost all their domain east of this river, but still hoped that the next European peace would give it back to them. Some of the Spanish officials remained in New Orleans for eighteen months after the cession, in expectation of that event.

The American population, composed chiefly of young, adventurous men, had taken some umbrage at the central government, and Burr must have heard expressions of this during his stay.

Toward the close of July, he bade farewell to his friends in New Orleans, promising to return to them ere long. To ascend those great rivers of the south-west was scarcely possible at that day. Daniel Clark furnished him with two horses, and a servant to bring them back, who attended him as far as Natchez. In the gay society of that place, he lingered a week; then, taking a guide, plunged into the dreary wilderness that lay between Natchez and Nashville, a distance of four hundred and fifty miles. The path, where there was a path, was a famous Indian trail, which wound around stagnant lakes, along sluggish streams, and through dismal swamps. At certain seasons, it was infested by robbers who used to lay

in wait for boatmen returning to the Ohio laden with the proceeds of their last voyage to New Orleans. Tired and worn with this miserable journey, performed in the hottest season of the year, the traveler reached Nashville on the 6th of August, and was once more domiciled with General Jackson.

Again, he was overwhelmed with attentions. He was complimented, too, with a public dinner, which was attended by all that Nashville could boast of distinction and talent.

He remained a week at the general's hospitable mansion. A two weeks' tour in Kentucky followed, during which, besides traversing another wilderness of a hundred and fifty miles, he visited Louisville, Frankfort, and Lexington, at all of which he was entertained with fatal distinction. He formed an acquaintance with Henry Clay, then in the dawn of his renown. Clay was strongly attracted to a man whom he, in common with most western men, regarded as the victim of persecution, and whose talents he admired.

It was during this very tour in Kentucky that the antipathy of the men of the West to their Spanish neighbors was kindled to fury by what is known as the "Kemper difficulty." Baton Rouge, though chiefly inhabited by Americans, was still held and garrisoned by Spaniards. The Americans, in the course of that summer, had formed a plot to "shake off the Spanish yoke," and to annex themselves to their countrymen on the other side of the Mississippi. For want of a competent leader, the plot failed, and the Spaniards, with their usual stupidity, were eager, not to conciliate, but to punish the "rebels." The three brothers Kemper, who had been the leading spirits of the rebellion, fled to the American side, where they established themselves. In their own houses, at midnight, they were seized by a party of Spanish troops, and conveyed across the line. They were soon re-captured; but this impudent violation of American soil touched the pride of the border States keenly, and it was while every man was breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the insolent Dons, that Burr was traversing those States. If *then*, he had done what next year he attempted, the issue might have been different — could not but have been different.

Meanwhile, the impression arose that Burr's presence in the West had something to do with these Spanish troubles, and a rumor to that effect soon found its way to the Spanish authorities, who still had prisoners on the American soil. September 7th, we find Daniel Clark writing to General Wilkinson, a letter upon the subject. That epistle has been thought a master-piece of dissembling. The reader may try his penetration upon it:

"Many absurd and wild reports are circulated here, and have reached the ears of the officers of the late Spanish government, respecting our ex-Vice-President. You are spoken of as his right-hand man, and even I am now supposed to be of consequence enough to combine with Generals and Vice-Presidents. At any other time but the present, I should amuse myself vastly at the folly and fears of those who are affected with these idle tales; but being on the point of setting off for Vera Cruz, on a large mercantile speculation, I feel cursedly hurt at the rumors, and might, in consequence of Spanish jealousy, get into a hobble I could not easily get out of. Entre nous, I believe that Minor, of Natchez, has a great part in this business, to make himself of importance. He is in the pay of Spain, and wishes to convince them he is much their friend. This is, however, a matter of suspicion on my part, but the channel through which the information reached me, makes me suppose it. Power, whose head is always stuffed with plots, projects, conspiracies, etc., etc., etc., and who sees objects through a mill-stone, is going to Natchez, next week, to unravel the whole of this extraordinary business, and then God have mercy on the culprits, for Spanish fire and indignation will be leveled at them. What in the name of heaven could have given rise to these extravagances?

"Were I sufficiently intimate with Mr. Burr, and knew where to direct a line to him, I should take the liberty of writing to him. Perhaps, finding Minor in his way, he was endeavoring to extract something from him. He has amused himself at the blockhead's expense, and then Minor has retailed the news to his employers. Inquire of Mr. Burr about this, and let me know at my return, which will be in three or six months. The

tale is a horrid one, if well told. Kentucky, Tennessee, the State of Ohio, and part of Georgia and Carolina, are to be bribed with the plunder of the Spanish countries west of us, to separate from the Union. This is but a part of the business. Heavens! what wonderful things there will be in those days. But how the devil I have been lugged into the conspiracy, or what assistance, I can be to it, is to me incomprehensible. Vous, qui savez tout, can best explain this riddle. Amuse Mr. Burr with an account of it, but let not these great and important objects, these almost imperial doings, prevent you from attending to my land business. Recollect that you, if you intend to become kings and emperors, must have a little more consideration for vassals; and if we have nothing to clothe ourselves with, for we can be clothed by the produce of our lands only; and if Congress take the land for want of formalities, we shall then have no produce, and shall make a very shabby figure at your courts. Think of this, and practice those formalities that are necessary, that I may have from my Illinois lands wherewith to buy a decent court-dress, when presented at your levee. I hope you will not have Kentucky men for your masters of ceremonies."

To this letter Wilkinson briefly replied; but only alluded to the rumor as "the tale of a tub of Burr," and passed to other subjects.

About the middle of September, Burr reached St. Louis, where General Wilkinson was. What passed between them has been told only by Wilkinson, who says that he was then struck and alarmed by the altered manner of his friend. "Burr seemed," says he, "to be revolving some great project, the nature of which he did not disclose. Speaking of the imbecility of the government, Colonel Burr said, 'it would molder to pieces, die a natural death,' or words to that effect; adding 'that the people of the western country were ready for revolt.' To this I recollect replying, that if he had not profited more by his journey, he had better have remained at Washington or Philadelphia. For surely, said I, my friend, no person was ever more mistaken! The western people dis-

affected to the government? They are bigoted to Jefferson and democracy! and the conversation dropped."

Other conversation of this kind followed, and Wilkinson, according to his own account, began to fear that Burr had conceived some dangerous and desperate enterprise. More than ever, therefore, he bestirred himself to promote his election to Congress. As evidence of this, Wilkinson adduces a letter of his to Governor Harrison of Indiana, dated September 19th. The part of it relating to Burr is as follows; "Shall I say in return I have a boon to ask of you, of no ordinary import? No, I will not! because the commutation would dishonor my application; but I will demand from your friendship a boon, in its influence coëxtensive with the Union; a boon, perhaps, on which that Union may much depend; a boon which may serve me, may serve you, and dis-serve neither; a boon, which from my knowledge of men, motives, and principles, will be acceptable to those whose politics we are bound to support. If you ask, what is this important boon which I so earnestly crave? I will say to you, return the bearer to the councils of our country, where his talents and abilities are all-important at the present moment. But, you continue, how is this to be done? By your fiat! Let Mr. Parke adhere to his profession; convene your Solomons and let them return him (Colonel Burr) to Congress. If you taste this proposition, speak to him, and he will authorize you to purchase, if necessary, an estate for him in your Territory."

Wilkinson says that, besides writing this letter, he warned a member of the cabinet, about the same time, to "keep an eye upon Burr." But he also admits that between September, 1805, and May, 1806, he received six letters in cipher from Colonel Burr, all of which contained expressions calculated to inculpate him (Wilkinson). Specimens of these will be given in a moment.

In October Burr had left the far West. On his way eastward, he called again at Blennerhassett Island, but found the master absent.

In November he passed a week at Washington, when he was received as of old, dined with the President, and gave an

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account of his western travels to the company. In the course of conversation, at the President's table, he chanced to mention that a certain military road, which figured on a map prepared by, or for General Wilkinson, had no existence in reality. The next day, fearing that this fact might injure the general in the President's estimation, he made a point of calling at the White House to explain it away. From members of the cabinet, he learned that *there would be no war with Spain.*

From Washington he went South to meet his son-in-law and Theodosia; returning in December to Philadelphia. There he wrote one of his mysterious letters to Wilkinson, of which the following is a copy. The date is December 12th: "About the last of October our cabinet was seriously disposed for war with the Spaniards; but more recent accounts of the increasing and alarming aggressions and annoyances of the British, and some courteous words from the French, have banished every such intention. In case of such warfare, Lee would have been commander-in-chief; truth, I assure you; he must, you know, come from Virginia. The utmost now intended is that sort of marine piracy which we had with the French under the former administration. Burr passed a week at Washington, and has been here ten days. Reception as usual. He had discovered nothing which excites doubts of the confirmation of Wilkinson's appointment. Secretary of Navy apprehended no difficulty. Military establishment will not increase nor diminish. On the subject of a certain speculation, it is not deemed material to write till the whole can be communicated. The circumstance referred to in a letter from Ohio remains in suspense; the auspices, however, are favorable, and it is believed that Wilkinson will give audience to a delegation composed of Adair and Dayton in February. Can 25 * * * be had in your vicinity at some few hours' notification?"

One would certainly suppose that men who corresponded thus were acquainted with each other's plans.

In this same month of December, Burr wrote his first letter to Blennerhassett. It was a very innocent communication,

though the contrary has been asserted. It began with regrets that he had not had the pleasure of meeting Blennerhassett on the island, and inquired where and when they could come together. Its main purport was that Blennerhassett was too much of a man to be satisfied with the common-place delights of rural seclusion. He should aspire to a career in which his powers would be employed. His fortune, already impaired, would gradually dwindle away, and his children be left destitute. The world was wide; he should go forth from his enervating solitude in pursuit of fortune and of honor.

The letter produced precisely the effect intended. Flattered by the notice of a distinguished man, anxious for his decaying fortune, fired with a desire for distinction, Blennerhassett replied that he should be glad to participate in any enterprise in which Colonel Burr might think proper to embark. He admitted, upon his trial, that in making this advance to Colonel Burr, he had in view two objects; namely, the procuring of lands in the South-west, and a military enterprise against the Spaniards. He said that he supposed the administration shared the universal indignation against the Spaniards, and that a war with Spain was impending; in which case Colonel Burr's military talents could not but be called into requisition.

This letter was dated December 21st, 1805, but did not reach Colonel Burr until the middle of February, 1806. At that time his plans were in suspense, and he was in some doubt whether he should be ever able to accomplish them. For two months Blennerhassett's letter lay in his desk unanswered. Meanwhile, he had turned his thoughts in another direction. Once more, he sought the public service.

In Jefferson's Anas, under the date of April 15th, 1806, occurs the narrative of Colonel Burr's second application to the President for an appointment. This narrative is doubtless essentially true, but Jefferson admits that it was written under feelings of resentment. Some of Burr's partisans in New York had been agitating this spring a project for his return to that State, again to play the leading part in its politics. Among other means employed (but not by him), was the revival of Burr's suit against Cheetham for libel; the object

being to procure demonstrative proof that Burr did not, in any manner whatever, intrigue for the presidency in 1801. Some of the depositions taken for this purpose seemed to reflect upon Jefferson, and it was while smarting under one of these, that he penned the following "ana:"

"About a month ago, Colonel Burr called on me, and entered into a conversation, in which he mentioned, that a little before my coming into office, I had written to him a letter, intimating that I had destined him for a high employ, had he not been placed by the people in a different one; that he had signified his willingness to resign as Vice-President, to give aid to the administration in any other place; that he had never asked an office, however; he asked aid of nobody, but could walk on his own legs, and take care of himself; that I had always used him with politeness, but nothing more; that he aided in bringing on the present order of things; that he had supported the administration; and that he could do me much harm. He wished, however, to be on different ground. He was now disengaged from all particular business — willing to engage in something — should be in town some days, if I should have any thing to propose to him.

"I observed to him that I had always been sensible that he possessed talents which might be employed greatly to the advantage of the public, and that, as to myself, I had a confidence, that if he were employed, he would use his talents for the public good; but that he must be sensible the public had withdrawn their confidence from him, and that in a government like ours it was necessary to embrace in its administration as great a mass of public confidence as possible, by employing those who had a character with the public of their own, and not merely a secondary one through the executive.

"He observed that if we believed a few newspapers, it might be supposed he had lost the public confidence, but that I knew how easy it was to engage newspapers in any thing.

"I observed that I did not refer to that kind of evidence of his having lost the public confidence, but to the late presidential election, when, though in possession of the office of Vice-President, there was not a single voice heard for his re-

taining it. That, as to any harm he could do me, I knew no cause why he should desire it, but at the same time, I feared no injury which any man could do me; that I never had done a single act, or been concerned in any transaction, which I feared to have fully laid open, or which could do me any hurt, if truly stated; that I had never done a single thing with a view to my personal interest, or that of any friend, or with any other view than that of the greatest public good; that, therefore, no threat or fear on that head would ever be a motive of action with me.

"He has continued in town to this time; dined with me this day week, and called on me to take leave two or three days ago.

"I did not commit these things to writing at the time, but I do it now, because in a suit between him and Cheetham, he has had a deposition of Mr. Bayard taken, which seems to have no relation to the suit, nor to any other object, except to calumniate me."

It is not surprising that Burr's friends should still resent this "ana." Doubtless, the mode of Burr's application is not as favorably stated as it would have been by Colonel Swartwout. But I beg to say that Jefferson's reply was unanswerable and noble, worthy of the best and ablest American then living. Burr was right, too, in laughing it to scorn. He was himself deceived as to his position and popularity by the enthusiasm of his reception at the West. But the West was not then, is not yet, though it is going to be, the Nation. Virginia, New England, Pennsylvania, and New York were the Nation in 1804, and in them it could with truth be said that Colonel Burr had lost the public confidence as a politician, and much of the public respect as a man.

From the time of this interview, Colonel Burr set his face westward, resolved, if possible, to execute the enterprise to which his recent correspondence had so often alluded. On the very day that Jefferson wrote the narrative just quoted, Burr replied to Blennerhassett's letter. He said he *had* projected, and still meditated, a "speculation" precisely of the character Blennerhassett had described. "It would have been

submitted to your consideration, in October last, if I had then had the good fortune to find you at home. The business, however, in some degree depends on contingencies not within my control, and will not be commenced before December, if ever. From this circumstance, and as the matter in its present state can not be satisfactorily explained by letter, the communication will be deferred till a personal interview can be had. With this view, I pray to be informed of your intended movements the ensuing season, and in case you should visit New Orleans, at what time and at what port you may be expected on the Atlantic coast. But I must insist that these intimations be not permitted to interrupt the prosecution of any plans which you have formed for yourself. No occupation which will not take you off the continent can interfere with that which I may propose. * * * We shall have no war unless we should be actually invaded."

The "contingencies" referred to in this letter were chiefly pecuniary. All depended on the possibility of his raising a considerable sum in cash, and a larger one in paper.

The day after answering Blennerhassett, he wrote another letter in cipher to General Wilkinson, of which the following is a copy:

"The execution of our project is postponed till December. Want of water in Ohio rendered movement impracticable: other reasons rendered delay expedient. The association is enlarged, and comprises all that Wilkinson could wish. Confidence limited to a few. Though this delay is irksome, it will enable us to move with more certainty and dignity. Burr will be throughout the United States this summer. Administration is damned, which Randolph aids. Burr wrote you a long let ter last December, replying to a short one deemed very silly. Nothing has been heard from the Brigadier since October. Is Cusion et Portes right? Address, Burr, at Washington."

The "Brigadier" was Wilkinson. "Cusion," was Colonel Cushing, second in command under Wilkinson. "Portes" was Major Porter, another of the brigadier's officers.

This letter confirms the impression, that "our project," whatever it was, was one in which Wilkinson was as much

implicated as Burr. But of all things in the world, circumstantial evidence is the most deceptive. That Wilkinson *knew* what Burr proposed, I can not doubt ; but that he had unequivocally engaged to join in the projected speculation, is a question upon which there may be two well-sustained opinions.

As the spring advanced, affairs in the South-west looked more and more threatening. The Spaniards added aggression to insolence. It had been agreed between the two governments, that until the boundary line should be settled by negotiation, each party should retain its posts, but establish no new ones, nor make any military movements whatever within the limits in dispute. But after making several petty encroachments, the Spanish commander, early in June, advanced a force of twelve hundred men to within twenty miles of Nachitoches. Instantly, General Wilkinson took measures for the defense of the frontier. He had only six hundred regulars under his command, most of whom were hurried forward to the scene of expected warfare. The forts of New Orleans were hastily repaired. Every militiaman in the West was furbishing his accoutrements, and awaiting the summons to the field. On the 4th of July, 1806, there were not a thousand persons in the United States who did not think war with Spain inevitable, impending, begun! The country desired it. A blow from Wilkinson, a word from Jefferson, would have let loose the dogs of war, given us Texas, and changed the history of the two continents.

But Napoleon, now stalking toward the summit of his power, had intimated that a declaration of war against Spain would be considered a declaration of war against *him*. Pitt, his great enemy, had just died. For the moment, Napoelon's word was law everywhere in the world, out of the range of British cannon.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE EXPEDITION.

The Objects of the Expedition — Burr's Confederates — Swartwout Dispatched to Wilkinson — Burr's Fatal Visit to the Morgans — Exercises a Regiment at Marietta — Vigorous Preparations — Rumors — Burr before the Court in Frankfort — Defended by Henry Clay — His Triumphant Acquittal.

Precisely when, precisely where, it was that Burr conceived the enterprise upon which his heart was now fixed, he could not perhaps himself have told. From an early day, schemes for revolutionizing the ill governed Spanish provinces of America, had been familiar to the people of the United States. During the Revolution, General Miranda was much in the American camp, firing the young officers, Hamilton particularly, with his own enthusiasm on this subject; and Burr must often have heard Miranda's plans talked over by the camp-fire. In this very year, 1806, Miranda sailed from New York to Venezuela, with an expedition, to realize the dream of his youth — to execute the purpose of his life. He failed; and failed again; and perished at last in a Spanish dungeon. It was to this expedition that Wilkinson alluded, when he said to Burr at St. Louis, that he feared *Miranda had taken the bread out of his mouth.* Burr used to say, that *Wilkinson* suggested the plan of his expedition — not Miranda.

It was no dream of republicanizing an oppressed people that prompted Burr's enterprise. He had had enough of republics. His design was to conquer Mexico from the Spaniards; to establish in that fine country, a strong, liberal, enlightened government; to place himself at the head of that government; and, if fortune favored, to extirpate the Spanish power on the continent. That done, it would be for the States west of the Alleghanies, in the exercise of their right as independ-

ent powers, to decide whether they would remain in the Union, or join the new empire. If they should choose the latter, Burr might select New Orleans for his capital, and rule from thence the whole of the vast valley of the Mississippi. If they should prefer the former, the city of Mexico would be the center and seat of his power. But these details were merely dreamed of. The conquest of Mexico, the deliverance of her people from an exacting and tyrannical government, the establishment of a dynasty worthy to rule so magnificent an empire, the formation of a court, which Theodosia should adorn by her beauty, and enliven by her talents, and where her boy should figure as the heir-apparent — these were the great objects of Burr's thoughts and endeavors during the year 1806.

Whether the execution of the project should be attempted soon, or late, or never, depended upon the turn which affairs might take on the south-western frontier. If war broke out, nothing would be easier than to organize an expedition against Mexico. Thousands of adventurous spirits would hasten to enroll themselves under the banner of a popular chief, and the people of Mexico* were known to be disaffected. Burr had received assurances that the priests would be passive if the church and its possessions were held inviolate. From certain commanders of Spanish militia, he had obtained

* One of Jefferson's letters to John Jay, dated Marseilles, May 1787, contains some interesting information respecting the inhabitants of Mexico at about the period of the American Revolution, derived from a Mexican whom Mr. Jefferson met in Paris. The following is an extract: "He (the Mexican) classes and characterizes the inhabitants of the country as follows: 1. The natives of old Spain, possessed of most of the offices of the government, and firmly attached to it. 2. The clergy, equally attached to the government. 3. The natives of Mexico, generally disposed to revolt, but without instruction, without energy, and much under the dominion of their priests. 4. The slaves, mulatto and black; the former enterprising and intelligent, the latter brave, and of very important weight into whatever scale they throw themselves; but he thinks they would side with their masters. 5. The conquered Indians, cowardly, not likely to take any side, nor important which they take. 6. The free Indians, brave and formidable, should they interfere, but not likely to do so, as being at a great distance."

promises that the moment he should appear in Texas with a respectable body of troops, they would order out their forces and join him *en masse*. Could there but be a beginning of war made, or even a plausible show of it, he saw his way clear to the halls of the Montezumas — to the throne of the Montezumas!

But there might be no war, or it might be long delayed.

To provide for both these contingencies, a large purchase of land was contemplated, far to the south-west, beyond the Mississippi, on the banks of the river Washita, a branch of the Red river. There the choice spirits of the expedition would have, at least, a rendezvous and a refuge. There the chief could, if necessary, fortify and maintain a position. There, if the grand scheme should fail or be abandoned, he would found a colony composed of persons of wealth, education, refinement and talent, who would embark capital in the most productive region of the South-west, and form the most brilliant, accomplished, and enlightened society on the continent. In July, 1806, this purchase was made. It comprised four hundred thousand acres, for which Burr was to pay forty thousand dollars, the first installment of which, five thousand dollars, he did actually pay. In this purchase, several persons participated, most of whom were near relatives or connections of Burr. One of his relatives in Connecticut, a descendant of Jonathan Edwards, advanced a great part of his savings for this purchase. Mr. Alston, probably, furnished money; it is certain he endorsed paper for his father-in-law. Burr's connections in New York were not backward in aiding him. From one soure and another, a sum was raised which, as I conjecture, did not exceed forty thousand dollars, though more was to be forthcoming, when needed.

Who were his confederates? Before all others, his daughter, who was devoted to the scheme heart and soul. To achieve a career, and a residence, which she, her husband, and her boy could share, were the darling objects with which Burr had gone forth to seek a new country. She caught eagerly at his proposal. She saw in it the means whereby her father could win a glorious compensation for the wrongs she

felt he had endured, and obtain a conspicuous triumph over all his enemies. Her husband, whose mind Burr had aided to form, and who tenderly loved Theodosia, entered into the enterprise with energy. In New York, it found adherents among the young ambitious men who had surrounded him in the days of his glory. The Swartwouts were in it. Marinus Willet, who was afterward Mayor of New York, was one of its promoters. A score or two of other New Yorkers were involved, in a greater or less degree. Doctor Erich Bollman, a German, who had distinguished himself by a gallant attempt to rescue Lafayette from prison, was one of Burr's most trusted confederates. Dayton was another. Colonel Dupiester was one of the leading spirits. General Jackson, a thorough-going hater of Spaniards, was enthusiastic in the cause. General Adair, of Kentucky, deep in Burr's confidence, approved his plans heartily, but was not personally engaged in them. Blennerhassett was completely captivated by an enterprise which was to enrich him and his children without his being subjected to disagreeable exertion. Upon his island the first rendezvous was to be made. Mrs. Blennerhassett, no less ardent, was preparing to entertain the chief and his daughter at her fantastic mansion; for it was settled that Theodosia should accompany her father, and that both she and Mrs. Blennerhassett should go with the expedition as far as Natchez or New Orleans; there to await the issue. Alston was to follow in a few weeks. Probably, five hundred persons in all, knew something of Burr's plans, and had entered into some kind of engagement to follow his fortunes. There were, also, four or five thousand whose names were on Burr's lists, and who, he thought, would hasten to his standard, as soon he should obtain a foothold on Spanish soil.

During the first half of the year 1806 Burr resided at Philadelphia, in a style and situation more obscure than was formerly his custom. He sought the society of men who had had cause to be dissatisfied with the government, such as Commodore Truxton, who had been struck from the navy list, and General Eaton, who could not get his claim against the government paid. To these men, as to others, he spoke in

contemptuous terms of the administration; he said a separation of the western States must come, sooner or later; he unfolded his own plans, and urged them to unite their fortunes with his. Mr. Davis says that Burr had repeated conferences with Mr. Merry, the British minister at Washington, who communicated the project to his government, and that Colonel Charles Williamson, a well-connected Scotchman, went to England to promote the business. "From the encouragement which he received," adds Mr. Davis, "it was hoped and believed that a British naval squadron would have been furnished in aid of the expedition. The Catholic bishop of New Orleans," he adds, "was also consulted, and prepared to promote the enterprise. He designated three priests of the order of Jesuits as suitable agents, and they were accordingly employed. * * * The superior of the convent of Ursuline nuns, at New Orleans, was in the secret. Some of the sisterhood were also employed in Mexico."

There is a vagueness about these statements which looks intentional, and lessens their credibility. The following is more positive: "At this juncture (January 6, 1806), Mr. Pitt died. Wilkinson must have heard of the death of the premier late in the spring of 1806. From that moment, in Mr. Burr's opinion, Wilkinson became alarmed, and resolved on an abandonment of the enterprise, at the sacrifice of his associates." It may have been the news of Pitt's death, then, that produced the temporary suspension of the scheme, during which Burr applied to the President for employment.

Omitting conjectures on points which the issue rendered of no importance, nothing remains but to narrate the events of the latter half of 1806, as they occurred. Never was an adventurer more sanguine of success than Burr was in July and August of that year. The plot seemed well laid. The excellence of it was that *both his schemes were genuine.* He really *had* two strings to his bow. If war broke out, he would march into Mexico; if not, he would settle on the Washita; and wait for a better opportunity. In either case, he was going westward never to return. In either case, a career opened

up before him which he believed in, and could have been satisfied with.

At the end of July, his preparations at the East being complete, his first movement was to send forward Samuel Swartwout, with a packet of letters and communications, in cipher, to General Wilkinson, for the purpose, as he said, of securing a concert of action between them. On the 29th of July, Swartwout, accompanied by another adventurer, young Ogden, a son of Matthew Ogden, of New Jersey, set out on his long journey to the lower Mississippi.

Six days after, Burr and his daughter, with two or three friends, and a servant or two, followed, taking what they supposed to be their last farewell of the eastern world. As they floated down the Ohio, Burr would occasionally make detours into the adjacent country for the purpose of procuring recruits, and feeling the western pulse. It so chanced, that one of the first, if not the first, visit of this kind, had consequences of the utmost importance.

It was to the house of Colonel Morgan, a name of renown in the West, a valiant old campaigner, who lived, with two stalwart sons, near Cannonsburg, Ohio, that this fatal visit was made. Civilities had passed between Morgan and Burr in former years, and the old patriot had conceived for Burr a very warm friendship, which his misfortunes and "persecutions" had strengthened. As his custom was, Colonel Burr gave notice of his coming, and the old gentleman, bursting with hospitality, sent forth his two sons to meet the expected guests. Colonel Burr rode with one of the sons, and Colonel Dupiester with the other. Burr's conversation surprised the young gentleman. Among other things, he said the Union could not last long; a separation of the States must ensue, as a natural consequence, in four or five years. He made minute inquiries respecting the militia and arms of the country, and the character of the officers. One of Morgan's workmen, a fine stout fellow, chanced to pass, and Burr said he wished he had ten thousand such.

After dinner, in the presence of a considerable company, Burr talked in a strain that shocked and puzzled these good

people still more. "I spoke," deposed Colonel Morgan, "of our fine country, I observed that, when I first went west, there was not a single family between the Alleghany mountains and the Ohio ; and that, by and by, we should have Congress sitting in this neighborhood or Pittsburg."

"No, never," said Colonel Burr, "for in less than five years you will be totally divided from the Atlantic States."

"God forbid!" exclaimed the old gentleman ; "I hope no such thing will ever happen, at least not in my time."

The conversation then turned to Burr's favorite topic of the imbecility of the Federal government. The narrative of Colonel Morgan continues thus :

"Colonel Burr said, that with two hundred men he could drive Congress, with the President at its head, into the river Potomac ; or that it might be done ; and he said with five hundred men, he could take possession of New York. He appealed to Colonel Dupiester, if it could not be done : he nodded assent. There was a reply made to this by one of my sons, that he would be damned if they could take our little town of Cannonsburg with that force. Some short time after this, Colonel Burr went out from the dining-room to the passage, and beckoned to my son Thomas. What their conversation was, I can not say. Soon after, a walk was proposed to my son's mill, and the company went out. When they returned, one (or both of my sons) came to caution me, and said, 'You may depend upon it, Colonel Burr will this night open himself to you. He wants Tom to go with him.' After the usual conversation, Colonel Burr went up stairs, and, as I thought, to go to bed. Mrs. Morgan was reading to me (as is usual, when the family have retired), when, about eleven o'clock, and after I had supposed he had been an hour in bed, she told me that Colonel Burr was coming down, and as she had heard my son's conversation, she added, 'You'll have it now.' Colonel Burr came down with a candle in his hand. Mrs. Morgan immediately retired. The colonel took his seat by me. He drew from his pocket a book. I suppose it was a memorandum-book. After looking at it, he asked me if I knew a Mr. Vigo, of Fort Vincent, a Spaniard. I replied, yes ; I knew

him; I had reasons to know him. One was, that I had reasons to believe that he was deeply involved in the British conspiracy in 1788, as I supposed; the object of which was to separate the States; and which General Neville and myself had suppressed. I called it a nefarious thing to aim at the division of the States. I was careful to put great emphasis on the word '*nefarious*.' Colonel Burr, finding what kind of man he had to deal with, suddenly stopped, thrust into his pocket the book which I saw had blank leaves in it, and retired to bed. I believe I was pretty well understood. The next morning Colonel Burr and Colonel Dupiester went off before breakfast, without my expecting it."

In short, Colonel Burr, on this occasion as on others, comported himself precisely as a man having "treasonable" designs would *not* comport himself, unless he were mad or intoxicated.

Not so thought Colonel Morgan. He thought there was danger in what he had heard. There was a court sitting in the neighborhood; he invited two of the judges to dinner, to whom he detailed all that Burr had said and done. These gentlemen wrote a joint letter to the President, giving him the same information, and advising that Burr's future movements be watched. Jefferson expressly says that this letter gave him the first intimation of Burr's designs. He acted upon the judges' suggestion by forwarding information to confidential persons in the western country, and, soon after, by detaching a government clerk, named Graham, with orders to go in pursuit of Burr, and ascertain, if possible, what his plans were. But in those days operations of this kind were slow. It was not until nearly the end of September that the judges' letter reached Washington; and two months, therefore, passed before Burr began to experience the results of his indiscretion; during which his affairs went on without interruption. In these days, a telegraphic dispatch would have finished the business in two hours.

Marietta was Burr's next halting-place. It happened that he arrived there on the day of a general training of the militia. Riding to the field, he exercised a regiment in a few

evolutions, and, by his prompt, energetic manner, gave the multitude a high idea of his military talents. In the evening, he and Theodosia attended a ball, where he completed the conquest of Marietta by the courtly grace of his manners. The belief was general that he was engaged in an expedition of some kind. The belief was equally general, that that expedition was sanctioned, or would be sanctioned, by the government, and he was at no loss for recruits in Marietta.

How far Burr guiltily inculcated the falsehood, that his ulterior designs were known and approved by the President, is still somewhat uncertain. Davis, who knew him intimately for forty years, says he never knew him to tell a *direct lie ;* and other friends of Burr have given me the same information. But Davis admits, that "by innuendoes or otherwise, Burr induced some to believe that his arrangements for the invasion of Mexico were with the knowledge, if not the approbation of the government." Strange perversion of morals, which could deem an indirect, or acted, falsehood, less unworthy of a gentleman than a bold and downright lie!

Mr. Jefferson, who, with all his admirable qualities, must be pronounced a credulous man, and who certainly burned and strove for Burr's conviction to a degree extraordinary and unaccountable, sent the following to the prosecuting attorney during the trial at Richmond: "It is *understood* that whenever Burr met with subjects who did not choose to embark in his projects, unless approved by their government, he asserted that he had that approbation. Most of them took his word for it, but it is said that with those who would not, the following stratagem was practiced. A forged letter, purporting to be from General Dearborne (Secretary of War), was made to express his approbation, and to say that I was absent at Monticello, but that there was no doubt that on my return, my approbation of his enterprise would be given. This letter was spread open on his table, so as to invite the eye of whoever entered his room, and he contrived occasions of sending up into his room those whom he wished to become witnesses of his acting under sanction. By this means he avoided committing himself to any liability to prosecution for forgery,

and gave another proof of being a great man in little things, while he is really small in great ones. I must add General Dearborne's declaration, that he never wrote a letter to Burr in his life, except that when here, once in a winter he usually wrote him a billet of invitation to dine."

How much truth there may be in this, I can not tell. Something resembling such a trick may have been resorted to once, and for some special purpose — but *not* for the purpose of overcoming the conscientious scruples of patriots. Patriots of conscientious scruples never read letters which they find lying open in the apartments of others. Nevertheless, Jefferson's main charge is undeniably true, namely, that the idea, in *some* way, was given out, that the government secretly approved of what Burr was doing. Burr would reply to this, that his plans were based on the certainty of war; and in time of war, private expeditions, designed to injure the enemy, can not *but* be approved by government.

Leaving his daughter upon Blennerhassett Island, Burr bent all his powers to preparing for the expedition. Contracts for fifteen large batteaux, to be capable of transporting five hundred men, were entered into at Marietta, and the work forthwith began. Quantities of flour, pork, and meal were purchased. On the island kilns were constructed for drying the corn. Men were daily added to the rolls. They appear to have been engaged for an object which was to be explained to them afterward, but all were to come equipped and armed, and to each was promised, as part of the compensation for his services, one hundred acres of land on the Washita. Blennerhassett was busy enough. To prepare the western mind for future contingencies, he wrote a series of articles in a neighboring newspaper, in which the advantages of a separation of the western States from the eastern were discussed and exhibited. His island resounded with the din of preparation. Mrs. Blennerhassett, happy in the society of Theodosia, full of confidence in her father's talents, was all a-glow with pleasant expectation. Burr was everywhere; now at Marietta; now at Chillicothe; then at Cincinnati; through Kentucky and Tennessee; everywhere gaining adherents, and enlarging his

acquaintance with men of influence; received always as the great man. Six boats were set building on the Cumberland, and four thousand dollars deposited with General Jackson to pay for them. In October, Mr. Alston arrived, and soon after, he, Theodosia, and Blennerhassett, journeyed, by easy stages, to Lexington, in Kentucky, leaving the energetic wife of Blennerhassett upon the island, to superintend the great concerns there going forward. On their journey they found the country full of rumors respecting Burr, and some scheme he was said to have in hand; but they also observed that these rumors were generally believed to be groundless; and attributed to the malice of Burr's old enemies, the Federalists.

Before long, the press began, in a confused and doubtful tone, to sound the alarm. In the *Western World*, a newspaper published at Frankfort, Kentucky, there appeared some articles, in which, along with many errors, Burr's scheme was shadowed forth, and he himself denounced as a traitor. The writer descanted on the disunion party of 1796, re-stated its plan of disunion, denounced anew the surviving members of that party, some of whom were in high place, and asserted that a gigantic conspiracy had been formed to revive and carry out the plan. All this, he avowed, was done through Spanish agents, who kept in pay some of the leading men of Kentucky. This farrago of truth and falsehood, though it convinced few, yet added fuel to the flame of popular excitement.

On the 3d of November, at Frankfort, Mr. Daviess, Attorney for the United States, rose in court, and moved that Aaron Burr be compelled to attend the court, to answer a charge to be made against him, of being engaged in an enterprise contrary to the laws of the United States, and designed to injure a power with which the United States were at peace. This movement took every one by surprise. Daviess was a noted Federalist, and the motion was at once concluded to be a mere manifestation of party spite. As the news flew about the town, nine tenths of the people, it is said, sided instantly with Burr, and indignantly denounced the attorney. Judge Innis evidently sympathized with the popular feeling, and,

after deliberating on the motion for two days, denied it. The interesting scenes which followed this decision at Frankfort, are spiritedly related by an eye-witness, or from information given by eye-witnesses, in Collins's History of Kentucky.

"Colonel Burr was in Lexington at the time, and was informed of the motion made by Daviess in an incredibly short space of time after it was made. He entered the court-house shortly after Innis had overruled the motion, and addressed the judge with a grave and calm dignity of manner which increased, if possible, the general prepossession in his favor. He spoke of the late motion as one which had greatly surprised him; insinuated that Daviess had reason to believe that he was absent upon business of a private and pressing nature, which, it was well known, required his immediate attention; that the judge had treated the application as it deserved; but as it might be renewed by the attorney, in his absence, he preferred that the judge should entertain the motion *now*, and he had voluntarily appeared in order to give the gentleman an opportunity of proving his charge.

"Nowise disconcerted by the lofty tranquillity of Burr's manner, than which nothing could be more imposing, Daviess promptly accepted the challenge, and declared himself ready to proceed as soon as he could procure the attendance of his witnesses. After consulting with the marshal, Daviess announced his opinion that his witnesses could attend on the ensuing Wednesday; and, with the concurrence of Burr, that day was fixed upon by the court for the investigation.

"Burr awaited the day with an easy tranquillity which seemed to fear no danger, and on Wednesday the court-house was crowded to suffocation. Daviess, upon counting his witnesses, discovered that Davis Floyd, one of the most important, was absent, and, with great reluctance, asked a postponement of the case. The judge instantly discharged the grand jury. Colonel Burr then appeared at the bar, accompanied by his counsel, Henry Clay and Colonel Allen. Colonel Burr arose in court, expressed his regret that the grand jury had been discharged, and inquired the reason. Colonel Daviess replied, and added, that Floyd was then in Indiana, attending

a session of the territorial legislature. Burr calmly desired that the cause of the postponement might be entered upon the record, as well as the reason why Floyd did not attend. He then, with great self-possession, and with an air of candor difficult to be resisted, addressed the court and crowded audience upon the subject of the accusation. His style was without ornament, passion, or fervor; but the spell of a great mind, and daring, but calm spirit was felt with singular power by all who heard him. He hoped the good people of Kentucky would dismiss their apprehensions of danger from him, if any such really existed. There was really no ground for them, however zealously the attorney might strive to awaken them. He was engaged in no project inimical to the peace or tranquillity of the country; as they would certainly learn whenever the attorney should be ready, which he greatly apprehended would never be. In the mean time, although private business urgently demanded his presence elsewhere, he felt compelled to give the attorney one more opportunity of proving his charge, and would patiently await another attack.

"Upon the 25th of November, Colonel Daviess informed the court that Floyd would attend on the 2d of December following, and another grand jury was summoned to attend on that day. Colonel Burr came into court attended by the same counsel as on the former occasion, and coolly awaited the expected attack. Daviess, with evident chagrin, again announced that he was not ready to proceed; that John Adair had been summoned, and was not in attendance, and that his testimony was indispensable to the prosecution. He again asked a postponement of the case for a few days, and that the grand jury should be kept impanneled until he could compel the attendance of Adair by attachment.

"Burr, upon the present occasion, remained silent, and entirely unmoved by any thing that occurred. Not so his counsel. A most animated and impassioned debate sprung up, intermingled with sharp and flashing personalities, between Clay and Daviess. Never did two more illustrious orators encounter each other in debate. The enormous mass which crowded to suffocation the floor, the galleries, the windows, the plat-

form of the judge, remained still and breathless for hours, while these renowned and immortal champions, stimulated by mutual rivalry, and each glowing in the ardent conviction of right, encountered each other in splendid intellectual combat. Clay had the sympathies of the audience on his side, and was the leader of the popular party in Kentucky. Daviess was a Federalist, and was regarded as persecuting an innocent and unfortunate man from motives of political hate. But he was buoyed up by the full conviction of Burr's guilt, and the delusion of the people on the subject; and the very infatuation which he beheld around him, and the smiling serenity of the traitor who sat before him, stirred his great spirit to one of his most brilliant efforts. All, however, was in vain. Judge Innis refused to retain the grand jury, unless some business was brought before them; and Daviess, in order to gain time, sent up to them an indictment against John Adair, which was pronounced by the jury 'not a true bill.' The hour being late, Daviess then moved for an attachment to compel the presence of Adair, which was resisted by Burr's counsel, and refused by the court, on the ground that Adair was not in contempt till the day had expired. On the motion of Daviess, the court then adjourned to the following day.

"In the interval, Daviess had a private interview with the judge, and obtained from him an expression of the opinion that it would be allowable for him as prosecutor to attend the grand jury in their room, and examine the witnesses, in order to explain to them the connection of the detached particles of evidence which his intimate acquaintance with the plot would enable him to do, and without which the grand jury would scarcely be able to comprehend their bearing. When the court resumed its sitting on the following morning, Daviess moved to be permitted to attend the grand jury in their room. This was resisted by Burr's counsel as novel and unprecedented, and refused by the court. The grand jury then retired, witnesses were sworn and sent up to them, and on the 5th of the month, they returned, as Daviess had expected, 'not a true bill.' In addition to this, the grand jury returned into court a written declaration, signed by the whole of them, in

which, from all the evidence before them, they completely exonerated Burr from any design inimical to the peace or well-being of the country. Colonel Allen instantly moved the court that a copy of the report of the grand jury should be taken and inserted in the newspapers, which was granted. The popular current ran with great strength in his favor, and the United States' attorney, for the time, was overwhelmed with obloquy.

"The acquittal of Burr was celebrated at Frankfort by a brilliant ball, numerously attended; which was followed by another ball given in honor of the baffled attorney, by those friends who believed the charge to be just, and that truth, for the time, had been baffled by boldness, eloquence, and delusion. At one of these parties the editor of the *Western World*, who had boldly sounded the alarm, was violently attacked, with a view of driving him from the ball-room, and was rescued with difficulty.

"Before Mr. Clay took any active part as the counsel of Burr, he required of him an explicit disavowal, upon his honor, that he was engaged in no design contrary to the laws and peace of the country. The pledge was promptly given by Burr in language the most comprehensive and particular. 'He had no design,' he said, 'to intermeddle with or disturb the tranquillity of the United States, nor its territories, nor any part of them. He had neither issued, nor signed, nor promised a commission to any person for any purpose. He did not own a single musket, nor bayonet, nor any single article of military stores, nor did any other person for him, by his authority or knowledge. His views had been explained to several distinguished members of the administration, were well understood and approved by the government. They were such as every man of honor, and every good citizen must approve.'"

Mr. Clay, there is reason to believe, went to his grave in the belief that each of these assertions was an unmitigated falsehood, and the writer of the above adduces them merely as remarkable instances of cool, impudent lying. On the contrary, with one exception, all of Burr's allegations were true; and even that one was true in a *Burrian* sense. He did *not*

own any arms or military stores. By the terms of his engagement with his recruits, every man was to join him armed, just as every backwoodsman was armed whenever he went from home. He had *not* issued nor promised any commissions; the time had not yet come for that. Jefferson and his cabinet undoubtedly knew his views and intentions up to the point where they ceased to be lawful! That is to say, they knew that he was going to settle in the western country, and that if the expected war should break out, he would head an onslaught on the Dons. His *ulterior* views may have been known to one, or even two, members of Jefferson's cabinet, for any thing that can *now* be ascertained. The moment the tide really turned against this fated man, a surprising ignorance overspread many minds that had before been extremely well-informed respecting his plans.

To several other persons, Burr held similar language about this time. He told John Smith of Ohio, that if Bonaparte with all his army were in the western country, with the objects attributed to himself, he would never see salt water again. November 27th, he wrote to Governor Harrison: "Considering the various and extravagant reports which circulate concerning me, it may not be unsatisfactory to you to be informed (and to you there can be no better source of information than myself) that I have no wish or design to attempt a separation of the Union, that I have no connection with any foreign power or government, that I never meditated the introduction of any foreign power or influence into the United States, or any part of its territories, but on the contrary should repel with indignation any proposition or measure having that tendency; in fine, that I have no project or views hostile to the interest or tranquillity or union of the United States, or prejudicial to its government, and I pledge my honor to the truth of this declaration. It is true that I am engaged in an extensive speculation, and that with me are associated some of your intimate and dearest friends The objects are such as every man of honor and every good citizen must approve. They have been communicated to several of the principal officers of our government, particularly to one

in the confidence of the administration. He has assured me my views would be grateful to the administration. Indeed, from the nature of them, it can not be otherwise, and I have no doubt of having received your active support, if a personal communication with you could have been had."

After his acquittal at Frankfort, Burr proceeded, with flying colors, to Nashville, where he was again received as a conquering hero, and where another grand ball celebrated his deliverance from "Federal machinations." He addressed himself to the task of completing his preparations, fondly supposing that now every obstacle was removed. The plan was, for Blennerhassett and his party to float down the Ohio, in the fifteen batteaux that were building at Marietta; and for himself and the Tennesseeans to descend the Cumberland. At the mouth of the Cumberland the parties were to unite, Burr to take the command, and the whole flotilla to proceed down the Mississippi in quest of what fortune might have in store for them.

But alas! never was a fly more completely entangled in a spider's web than was this adventurer in the meshes of his own plot, at the moment when every body was congratulating him on his triumph, and when he saw the path to fortune and glory clear and bright before him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE EXPLOSION.

Swartwout's Arrival in General Wilkinson's Camp — The Cipher Letters — Wilkinson Reveals the Scheme — Sends Information to the President — The Proclamation — Wilkinson's Measures — The Public Frenzy — Scenes on Blennerhassett Island — Descent of the River — Burr Surrenders — Grand Jury Refuse to Indict Him — His Flight into the Wilderness.

The summer of 1806 was a busy one indeed with General Wilkinson. What with fortifying New Orleans, transporting troops to the Sabine, calling out the militia, preparing them for the field, and writing long dispatches to the Secretary of War, the portly general had had his hands full. He had never before been so important a personage. Beside being the governor of a Territory, he was the commander-in-chief of the army; and the critical relations subsisting between Spain and the United States fixed upon him, for the time, the eyes of two nations. It was this — not Pitt's death — which made him a traitor to Burr, if he was a traitor to Burr.

Toward the close of September, he repaired in person to the neighborhood of the Sabine, where, for several weeks, a body of his troops had been confronting the Spanish camp. Every thing wore a more warlike aspect than ever, and the American soldiers were impatient to be led against the enemy. Wilkinson himself expected battle, so he said; was expecting it daily; when an event occurred which totally and instantly changed the current of his plans. This was the arrival in camp of Samuel Swartwout.

If Wilkinson's account be true, the very means which Burr adopted to precipitate war, was the direct and only cause of its prevention.

Misled by false information respecting the general's movements, Swartwout and his companion had been traveling for

nine weeks, with all the rapidity possible in the year before Fulton went to Albany in his steamboat. Leaving Ogden to continue his journey to New Orleans, Swartwout, on the 8th of October, came in sight of Wilkinson's quarters at Nachitoches, and inquired for Colonel Cushing, the second in command. He was conducted to the quarters of that officer, which were, indeed, at head-quarters. To him he presented a letter from Dayton, which introduced Ogden to Cushing's acquaintance, but mentioned Swartwout as Ogden's traveling companion. What followed the reading of this letter has been related by Colonel Cushing himself in a formal deposition: "The gentleman informed me," he deposed, "that he was the Mr. Swartwout mentioned in the letter, and I presented him to General Wilkinson as the friend of General Dayton, and requested him to take a seat with us at table, which he did. Mr. Swartwout then observed that Mr. Ogden and himself, being on their way to New Orleans, had learned at Fort Adams that our troops and some militia were assembling at Nachitoches, from whence they were to march against the Spanish army, then in our neighborhood; and that the object of his visit was to act with us as a volunteer. He remained with us for some time, and conversed on various topics, but said nothing which could excite a suspicion against him; and he left us, with a strong impression, on my mind that his business to New Orleans was of a commercial nature, and could be conducted by Mr. Ogden during his absence. While he was in my quarters, I was called out on business, and was absent from five to ten minutes."

During this brief absence of Colonel Cushing from the room, Swartwout seized the opportunity to give the general the important packet of which he was the bearer. As a specimen of the flat contradictions with which every part of the evidence respecting Burr's expedition abounds, it may be mentioned that Wilkinson asserts that the packet was slyly slipped into his hand; while Swartwout swears that, being alone with the general, he presented the packet to him in the ordinary manner. It was received in silence, and, soon after, Swartwout left the general and strolled about the camp, comport-

ing himself, in all respects, as became his assumed character of volunteer.

It was not till evening that Wilkinson had time and opportunity to examine the important packet. He found it to consist of three letters, two of them in cipher, and one in ordinary writing. First, there was the following letter from Burr to Wilkinson, introducing Swartwout. This was in common hand: "Dear Sir, Mr. Swartwout, the brother of Colonel S., of New York, being on his way down the Mississippi, and presuming he may pass you at some post on the river, has requested of me a letter of introduction, which I give with pleasure, as he is a most amiable young man and highly respected from his family and connections. I pray you to afford any friendly offices which his situation may require, and beg you to pardon the trouble which this may give you."

Secondly, the packet contained the celebrated cipher letter from Burr to the general, a copy of which, as given in Wilkinson's Memoirs, is as follows:

"Yours, post-marked 13th of May, is received. I, Aaron Burr, have obtained funds, and have actually commenced the enterprise. Detachments from different points, and under different pretenses, will rendezvous on the Ohio, 1st November — every thing internal and external, favors views; protection of England is secured. T—— is going to Jamaica to arrange with the admiral on that station; it will meet on the Mississippi. ——, England, ——, navy of the United States are ready to join, and final orders are given to my friends and followers: it will be a host of choice spirits. Wilkinson shall be second to Burr only, Wilkinson shall dictate the rank and promotion of his officers. Burr will proceed westward, 1st August, never more to return; with him goes his daughter; the husband will follow in October with a corps of worthies.

"Send forth an intelligent and confidential friend with whom Burr may confer; he shall return immediately with further interesting details; this is essential to concert and harmony of movement. Send a list of all persons known to Wilkinson, west of the mountains, who may be useful, with a note delineating their characters. By your messenger send me four or

five commissions of your officers, which you can borrow under any pretense you please; they shall be returned faithfully. Already are orders to the contractors given to forward six months' provisions to points Wilkinson may name: this shall not be used until the last moment, and then under proper injunctions. The project is brought to the point so long desired. Burr guaranties the result with his life and honor, with the honor, and fortunes of hundreds of the best blood of our country.

"Burr's plan of operation is, to move down rapidly from the Falls on the 15th of September, with the first 500 or 1,000 men in light boats, now constructing for that purpose, to be at Natchez between the 5th and 15th of December; there to meet Wilkinson; there to determine whether it will be expedient in the first instance to seize on or pass by Baton Rouge. On receipt of this send an answer. Draw on Burr for all expenses, etc. The people of the country to which we are going, are prepared to receive us. Their agents, now with Burr, say, that if we will protect their religion, and will not subject them to a foreign power, that in three weeks all will be settled. The gods invite to glory and fortune; it remains to be seen whether we deserve the boon. The bearer of this goes express to you; he will hand a formal letter of introduction to you from Burr. He is a man of inviolable honor and perfect discretion; formed to execute rather than to project; capable of relating facts with fidelity, and incapable of relating them otherwise. He is thoroughly informed of the plans and intentions of Burr, and will disclose to you as far as you inquire and no further. He has imbibed a reverence for your character, and may be embarrassed in your presence. Put him at ease, and he will satisfy you."

Thirdly, as though to make assurance doubly sure, the following letter from Dayton was brought to bear on the general's mind:

"Dear Sir—It is now well ascertained that you are to be displaced in next session. Jefferson will affect to yield reluctantly to the public sentiment, but yield he will. Prepare yourself, therefore, for it. You know the rest. You are not

a man to despair, or even despond, especially when such prospects offer in another quarter. Are you ready? Are your numerous associates ready? Wealth and glory, Louisiana and Mexico! I shall have time to receive a letter from you before I set out for Ohio. Ohio. Address one to me here, and another in Cincinnati. Receive and treat my nephew affectionately as you would receive your friend DAYTON."

It was late at night before Wilkinson had deciphered these letters sufficiently to have an idea of their drift. His resolution was taken without delay. Burr had *overdone it;* had put more upon the general than he had the strength to execute. The continuation of Colonel Cushing's deposition shows that, within a few hours after Wilkinson had mastered the contents of the packet, he committed himself to an exposure of the scheme. "The next morning," says Cushing, "I was walking on the gallery in front of my quarters, when General Wilkinson came up, and taking me aside, informed me that he had something of a very serious nature to communicate to me. So much so that, although it was necessary to hold it in strict reserve for the present, he begged me to bear it in mind, that I might be able to make a fair statement of it at any future period. He then asked me if I knew, or had heard, of any enterprise being on foot in the western States. I replied that I had heard nothing on the subject, and asked him what the enterprise was to which he alluded. He then said, 'Yes, my friend, a great number of individuals possessing wealth, popularity, and talents, are, at this moment, associated for purposes inimical to the government of the United States. Colonel Burr is at their head, and the young gentleman who delivered you the letter last evening, is one of his emissaries. The story of serving as a volunteer is only a mask. He has brought me a letter from Colonel Burr, which, being in cipher, I have not yet been fully able to make out; but I have discovered that his object is treasonable, and that it is my duty to oppose him by every means in my power. He assures me that he has funds; says the navy is with him; offers to make me second in command, and to give the officers of the army any thing I may ask for them; and he requests

me to send a confidential friend to confer with him at Nashville, in Tennessee. In fact, he seems to calculate on me and the army as ready to join to him.'

"I then asked the general whether he had received any information or instruction on this subject from government, to which he replied that he had not, and that he must therefore adopt such measures as, in his judgment, were best calculated to defend the country. He said he would immediately march to the Sabine, and endeavor to make such terms with the Spanish commander as would justify him in removing the greater part of his force to the Mississippi; and that the moment this could be effected, he would send me to New Orleans in a light barge, with orders to secure the French train of artillery at that post, and to put the place in the best possible situation for defense, and that he would follow with every man that could be spared from Nachitoches, with all possible expedition. He told me that he would give the information he had received, to the President of the United States, and solicit particular instructions for his government, but as delay might prove ruinous, he would pursue the course before suggested, as the only means in his power, to save the country, until the pleasure of the President could be known."

At the last moment, then, Wilkinson shrank from the work expected of him. The probability is strong that he always *meant* to do so. That he was a weak, vain, false, greedy man, is likely enough. That carried away by the magic of Burr's resistless *presence*, and hoping the scheme would never involve *him* in its folds, he suggested, encouraged, and aided it, is very probable. That he had given Burr to understand in some vague way, that he would strike a blow which would begin a war, whenever it should be needed, is also probable That he chose the part he did choose from a calculation of advantages to himself, from motives mean and mercenary rests upon evidence that convinces.* Nevertheless, the fact re-

* The charge that Wilkinson sent a confidential agent, Walter Burling, to Mexico, to demand of the Viceroy a compensation of two hundred thousand dollars for his services in suppressing Burr's expedition, is supported by the following evidence: 1. The Vice-Queen of Mexico, in 1816, after her hus-

mains, that he did *not* "strike the blow;" he did *not* involve two nations in war; he did *not* shape his course according to the wishes of Aaron Burr, instead of the orders of Thomas Jefferson. If he was a traitor, he was a traitor to his confederates, not to his country, his commission, his flag. True, the country, particularly the western States, desired war, and would have applauded him for beginning it. But to a soldier, his country speaks only through the commands of its chief.

For ten days Swartwout remained in camp, during which Wilkinson seemed to favor and applaud the project, and extracted from him all the information he possessed. Swartwout conversed freely, replying to all of Wilkinson's questions, without suspicion of his treachery. "I inquired," says Wilkinson, in his Memoirs, "what would be their course? He said, this territory (Louisiana) would be revolutionized, where the people were ready to join them, and that there would be some seizing he supposed, at New Orleans; that they expected to be ready to embark about the 1st of February, and intended to land at Vera Cruz, and to march from thence to Mexico. I observed that there were several millions of dollars in the bank of this place, to which he replied, 'We know it full well;' and on remarking that they certainly did not mean to violate private property, he said they 'merely meant to borrow, and would return it; that they must equip themselves in New Orleans; that they expected naval protection from Great Britain; that Captain ——, and the officers of our navy were so disgusted with the government, that they were ready to join; that similar disgusts prevailed throughout the

band's death, asserted it repeatedly to Colonel Richard Raynal Keene, an Irish gentleman in the Mexican service. 2. Dr. Patrick Mangan, an Irish priest and professor, who served as interpreter between the Viceroy and Burling, testified, in writing, to the same effect, adding, that the application was contemptuously refused by the Viceroy, and Burling ordered out of the country. 3. Colonel Keene, who afterward practiced law in New Orleans, *deposed* to having heard the statements of the Vice-Queen, as aforesaid; and placed on permanent and legal record in New Orleans, a declaration of the Vice-Queen's to the same effect, signed with her own hand; also, a formal statement by Dr. Mangan; and lastly, his own affidavit. All of these documents are duly preserved in New Orleans at the proper office.

western country, where the people were zealous in favor of the enterprise, and that pilot-boat built schooners were contracted for along our western coasts for their service.' "

Swartwout left the camp on the 18th of October, and proceeded on his way down the river, nothing doubting. Wilkinson then set about sending information to the President. To conceal his object, he caused Lieutenant Smith to resign his commission on pretense of a desire to return to his home in the East; and to him Wilkinson intrusted dispatches for the President. To pay his expenses to Washington, he furnished him with five hundred dollars; none too large a sum for a journey upon which a man might have to buy a boat or two, and wear out two or three horses.

The messenger left camp on the 21st of October, and delivered his dispatches to the President on the 25th of November. On the 27th, Jefferson issued his proclamation, and sent it flying through the States, paralyzing the enterprise as it flew, and filling the country with consternation. It is noticeable, that neither in Wilkinson's dispatches, nor in Jefferson's proclamation, was the name of Burr mentioned. Wilkinson, indeed, expressly and falsely wrote that he did not know who the prime mover of the conspiracy was. He admitted, afterward, that he wrote a letter to Burr after the receipt of the cipher, but, upon reflection, pursued the letter and destroyed it. The President's proclamation merely announced that unlawful enterprises were on foot in the western States; warned all persons "to withdraw from the same without delay," "as they will answer the contrary at their peril, and incur prosecution with all the rigors of the law;" and commanded all officers, civil and military, to use their immediate and utmost exertions to bring the offending persons to condign punishment.

While Wilkinson was still in some doubt what course to pursue, he received a letter from an acquaintance in Natchez, which (as he says) decided him. It stated that a well-authenticated rumor was afloat, "that a plan to revolutionize the western country has been formed, matured, and is ready to explode; that Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee, Orleans, and In

diana, are combined to declare themselves independent on the 15th of November. That proposals have been made to some of the most influential characters of St. Louis, by an accredited agent of the conspiracy, to join in the plan." And pages more to the same effect.

Then it was that the general, perceiving the golden opportunity, fully resolved to set up in the character of Deliverer of his Country. He went to the Sabine, patched up an arrangement with the Spaniards, put every thing in train for the withdrawal of the troops (who retired cursing the general for ordering them away from an enemy they were eager to engage), sent forward an officer to begin the work of preparing New Orleans for defense, and, on the 24th of November, arrived there himself to deliver a devoted province from spoliation and ruin.

Prodigious was his zeal, enormous were his labors, terrible and ridiculous was the excitement he created. The current belief was, that the "conspiracy" extended from one end of the Union to the other, embracing immense numbers of the most wealthy and influential citizens; that seven thousand armed men were on their way to the scene; and that Burr, with a vanguard of two thousand, was then descending the river, and might be expected at any moment to fall upon the town; that the city swarmed with his adherents, who only awaited his arrival to throw off the mask and assist in the reduction of the place. Martial law was proclaimed. Wilkinson dispatched a lieutenant to the British admiral at Jamaica, to put him on his guard against Burr's emissaries. A public meeting was held, at which Wilkinson harangued the excited multitude, and gave them a narrative of Swartwout's mission, and of the dread secrets his acuteness had drawn from that agent of treason. Governor Claiborne, too, addressed the meeting, exhorting every citizen to stand to the defense of a country toppling on the verge of ruin. The volunteer battalion offered their services; its ranks were swelled by hundreds of recruits; and, dividing itself into companies, it paraded by day, and patrolled by night, giving the city the appearance of a garrisoned town. New stockades were con-

structed in all directions. A party of sixty men were stationed at a point some distance above the city, and ordered to stop and thoroughly overhaul every descending craft. Business was at a stand-still. The crews of the vessels in port, American and foreign, volunteered to aid in the defense of the city.

Emboldened by the general terror, and supported by orders from the President, Wilkinson soon began to make arrests. Swartwout, Bollman, Ogden, and Adair, were seized, and incontinently shipped, per schooner, to Baltimore. A hundred men gallantly surrounded the hotel where General Adair lived, and, seizing him as he sat at table eating his dinner, bore him off in triumph to head-quarters. There were secret sessions of the legislature; there were proclamations from Governor Claiborne, and from the governors of the adjacent territories. The Spaniards were in alarm. As the news sped on its way to Mexico, guards were doubled, forts were repaired, and garrisons were increased. The western States, agitated all the summer by rumors, soon caught the infection of this new frenzy, and increased its virulence.

A month passed. The new year was at hand. No signs of the flotilla yet. Wilkinson began to be uneasy. He was growing ridiculous, and he felt it. Burr's adherents, who comprised the élite of the young American residents, particularly the members of the bar, recovered from the stunning effect of Wilkinson's vociferation, and ventured to oppose his violent and arbitrary proceedings. Half the month of January passed, and still no flotilla. The alarm subsiding, we find the grand jury *presenting Wilkinson's measures* as illegal and unconstitutional. The press denounced him too. Comforted, however, by a very long, complimentary, and confidential letter from Jefferson, he held his course, and ruled the territory with a high and mighty hand — to the wrathful disgust of a majority of the American residents.

By this time the eastern States had caught the alarm. Jefferson had received full particulars of Swartwout's mission. Bollman and Swartwout had reached the seat of government, had been examined and discharged for want of evidence — as

well they might be, for not one unlawful act had been committed by them. Special messages from the President, attributing to Burr designs the most treasonable, were sent to Congress, where they provoked excited discussion. Military companies of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston wrote to the President, offering their services. The Senate actually passed an act suspending the writ of Habeas Corpus; but the House, recovering its serenity in time, rejected the measure by one hundred and thirteen to nineteen.

While the public excitement was at fever heat, General Eaton came forward with a deposition which raised it to the boiling point, and turned the tide of feeling so strongly against Burr that it was never reversed in his life-time, and has not been reversed to this day. With General Eaton, Burr had conversed in the same style as that which had so shocked the honest Morgans; and with the more freedom, as he knew that Eaton felt himself aggrieved by the government's delaying to compensate him for his services and disbursements in Barbary. Very few weeks elapsed, *after* this deposition had been made, before Eaton's account with the government was settled by the payment of ten thousand dollars. In the trial, Eaton's evidence will be given at length. Here it is only necessary to say that his wildly-exaggerated version of Burr's wild talk about a separation of the western States, and throwing Congress into the Potomac, was the testimony which, in connection with the cipher to Wilkinson, convinced the people of the United States that Aaron Burr was a traitor.

To return to Blennerhassett Island.

Graham, the government's confidential agent, in the performance of the duty intrusted to him, reached Marietta, where the batteaux were building, about the middle of November, and immediately obtained an interview with Blennerhassett. Passing himself off as one of Burr's confederates, he soon got from that unsuspecting gentleman the information he desired. He found Blennerhassett all enthusiasm, and unconscious that the enterprise in which he was engaged could be seriously objected to by any one. It was the settle-

ment on the Washita that seemed to engage his attention most; the expedition to Mexico being a secondary and conditional object. Graham, supposing him to be a deluded man, the tool of artful conspirators, presented himself, at length, in his true character; did his utmost to persuade Blennerhassett to abandon the enterprise, and informed him that any attempt to descend the Ohio with an armed force would be prevented by the authorities. Blennerhassett's ardor was cooled for a day or two by this interview with Graham, but the opportune arrival at the island of a "corps of worthies," young adventurers from the city of New York, revived his hopes. His wife, too, who was more eager for the scheme than he had ever been, adding her eloquence, all his old enthusiasm was soon rekindled, and he longed for the day of their departure.

Graham, meanwhile, completed his inquiries at Marietta, and went to Chillicothe, then the capital of the State of Ohio; and, laying his information before the governor, asked the aid of the State in suppressing the enterprise. The legislature was in session. The governor sent them a secret message, to which they promptly responded by passing an act empowering him to use the resources of the State for the purpose desired. He proceeded to act with energy. The militia of the district, under command of a major-general, were called out, and marched to Marietta, where they captured the fifteen batteaux. To intercept parties from above, they were stationed along the banks of the river, where they occupied themselves with drinking whisky and playing upon one another practical jokes. They were as rude, undisciplined a horde of young backwoodsmen as have ever been assembled for mischief or for pleasure. The company in charge of the captured boats were so careless that an attempt of a party of Burr's men to retake them came within an ace of succeeding. One of the boats was got safely away, but before the others could be set afloat, the militiamen were roused, and the party had to fly.

The islanders, astounded and dismayed by these events, knew not what course to take. Blennerhassett Island, like all the islands of the Ohio river, being part of the State of Virginia, they felt themselves safe from the authorities of Ohio.

But early in December, the President's proclamation reached the neighborhood. Under its authority, the colonel of a militia regiment in Wood county, Virginia, called out his men, with the intention of marching to the island, arresting the whole band of confederates, and seizing their arms and stores. News of this movement was brought to Blennerhassett the day before the one named for its execution. As soon as night fell, four boats were hurriedly loaded, and the whole party of confederates, thirty or forty in number, embarked and made the best of their way down the river, leaving Mrs. Blennerhassett and her two little boys, with some servants, to abide the storm of the morrow. It was arranged that she should procure their "family boat" from Marietta, and follow the flying band in a few days.

The next morning, the expected irruption of wild militia took place. The colonel, finding the island deserted, left a small party in charge, and marched across one of the giant "bends" of the Ohio to intercept the fugitives at the mouth of the Great Kanawha. Ascertaining that the boats had not yet passed that point, he stationed a company on the bank of the river with the strictest injunctions to watch all night. It was a cold evening in December, however; the whisky-flask circulated; a drunken debauch ensued; the flotilla glided silently by, and, before daylight, was beyond pursuit. A day or two after, a party of fourteen young men on their way down the river to join the expedition, were arrested near the island, and conducted to it for safe keeping. A ridiculous examination took place, in one of Blennerhasset's grand apartments, before three county justices, to whom the young city gallants paid small respect. Nothing whatever appearing against them, they were discharged.

It was during this examination that the spirit of license and riot broke out among the militiamen. The lady of the mansion had gone herself to Marietta to demand her boat of the authorities, and the colonel of the militia, who was a gentleman and a soldier, was also absent. First of all, the men broke into the wine-cellar, and there drank themselves into Vandals. Then, they ranged the house, destroying or dis-

figuring wherever they went; firing rifle-balls through painted ceilings, tearing down costly drapery, and dashing to pieces mirrors and vases. Then they rushed, like so many savages, about the grounds, destroying the shrubbery, and breaking down trellises and arbors. The ornamental fences were torn away, piecemeal, to make fires for the sentinels at night. In the midst of this riot and destruction Mrs. Blennerhassett returned; but the embarrassments of her situation, and her anxiety for the success of the expedition were such, that she surveyed the ruin of her abode with indifference.

She had been refused the boat. In this dilemma, the party of young men who had just been released, and who were preparing to continue their journey, offered her an apartment in theirs. In a few hours she was ready, and, December 17th, left her island in the hands of the lawless crew who had laid it desolate.

Burr was still at Nashville. Graham learning that boats for the expedition were building on the Cumberland, hastened, after rousing Ohio and Kentucky, to put the powers of Tennessee on the alert. An express with the President's proclamation reached the Governor of Tennessee on the 19th, and preparations were made immediately to seize the boats and arrest the men. But timely information reached the chief. On the 22d, with two boats and a few men, armed only according to the custom of the country, he dropped down the Cumberland. The next day Graham himself arrived at Nashville, to find the "conspirators" beyond his reach.

At the mouth of the Cumberland, the parties met; in all, thirteen boats and about sixty men. Colonel Burr here briefly addressed the band of adventurers, drawn up on the bank of the Ohio. He said he had intended here to make an exposition of his designs and plan of operations, but the events which had occurred obliged him to defer doing so to a future opportunity. He should go forward, and had still confidence in the success of their enterprise.

Ignorant of Wilkinson's treachery, away went Burr with his flotilla down the Ohio, down the Mississippi, stopping boldly at the forts on the banks, asking and receiving favors,

and occasionally picking up a recruit or two. He wore a smiling face, and reassured every one by the cheerful serenity of his bearing. It was not until he reached Bayou Pierre, about thirty miles above Natchez, that he heard of the course which had been pursued by Wilkinson, and of the prodigious excitement which his measures had created in the lower country. There, too, he read the proclamation of the Governor of Mississippi, charging him and his followers with being conspirators against their country, and calling on the officers of the government to renew their oath of fidelity to the United States, and give their best efforts toward crushing this nefarious plot.

Whatever his feelings may have been at the discovery, Colonel Burr never for one moment lost his self-possession; but proceeded, on the very instant, to grapple with this new complication of difficulties. He wrote a public letter denying the truth of the governor's allegations, and asserting that he had no objects but such as were lawful and honorable. "If," said he, "the alarm which has been excited should not be appeased by this declaration, I invite my fellow-citizens to visit me at this place, and to receive from me, in person, such further explanations as may be necessary to their satisfaction, presuming that when my views are understood, they will receive the countenance of all good men." This letter, he requested, might be read to the militia, who were assembled for his arrest.

But the excitement had risen to a height which could not be allayed by fine words. The news of Burr's arrival at Bayou Pierre reached Natchez on the 14th of January, when the whole militia force of the neighborhood, who had been for weeks expecting the summons, seized their arms, and hurried to the rendezvous. In a few hours, two hundred and seventy-five men were ready to embark. All one cold and dismal night they worked their way up the river to a point near where the dread flotilla was moored. There disembarking, they were joined by a troop of cavalry, and were soon in readiness to march against the *foe*. It was thought best, however, first to ascertain if Colonel Burr was disposed to resist this formidable

array, or would surrender peacefully to the lawful authorities. For this purpose, George Poindexter, the Attorney-General of the Territory, and Major Shields of the militia, visited the flotilla, and had an interview with its commander.

A letter from the acting governor was handed to Burr, who read it, and spoke with some contempt of the public alarm to which it alluded. "As to any projects," said he, "which may have been formed between General Wilkinson and myself, heretofore, they are now completely frustrated by the perfidious conduct of Wilkinson; and the world must pronounce him a perfidious villain. If I am sacrificed, my port-folio will prove him to be such." He declared that, so far was he from having any design hostile to the United States, he had intended to meet the governor at the general muster at Bayou Pierre. Upon the Attorney-General's urging him to surrender, he demanded an interview with the governor. After some further colloquy, the parties separated, Burr agreeing to meet Governor Mead on the following day at a designated house near by.

The governor came at the time appointed, and, after meeting Burr, demanded his unconditional surrender, and that of his whole party, to the civil authorities, and gave him fifteen minutes to decide. Resistance being out of the question, Burr only requested that if Wilkinson should attempt to get possession of his person by a military force, it might be resisted. He then surrendered, and was conducted to the neighboring town of Washington, where two citizens became sureties for his appearance at court on the following day, in the sum of ten thousand dollars. His men remained in the vicinity of the flotilla.

A court of justice was to Aaron Burr what his native heath was to MacGregor. On that field he was invincible. It was only after warm discussions that it was concluded that he could be lawfully tried in the Territory. The next step was to get him indicted for some offense. A grand jury was impanneled, and witnesses were sent in to them. Imagine the feelings of the Attorney-General when he read the result of all his toils in the following presentments:

"The grand jury of the Mississippi Territory, on a due in-

vestigation of the evidence brought before them, are of opinion that Aaron Burr has not been guilty of any crime or misdemeanor against the laws of the United States, or of this Territory; or given any just cause of alarm or inquietude to the good people of the same.

"The grand jurors present, as a grievance, the late military expedition, unnecessarily, as they conceive, fitted out against the person and property of the said Aaron Burr, when no resistance had been made to the civil authorities.

"The grand jurors also present, as a grievance, destructive of personal liberty, the late military arrests, made without warrant, and, as they conceive, without other lawful authority; and they do sincerely regret that so much cause has been given to the enemies of our glorious Constitution, to rejoice at such measures being adopted, in a neighboring Territory, as, if sanctioned by the Executive of our country, must sap the vitals of our political existence, and crumble this glorious fabric in the dust."

It was of no avail for the Attorney-General to declare that such presentments were a disgrace and an outrage, nor for the judge to pronounce them impertinent and useless. The people were with the prisoner. Nothing approaching or resembling a breach of the law had been committed by him; and, in short, the grand jury had made up its mind, and would not recede from its position.

His companions were at perfect liberty. A Natchez newspaper of the time, commenting on this attempt to indict, says that "Burr and his men were *caressed* by a number of the wealthy merchants and planters of Adams county; several balls were given to them as marks of respect and confidence." Also, "that the proceedings against the accused were more like a mock trial than a criminal prosecution, and that, during the trial, Judge Bruin appeared more like his advocate than his impartial judge." All of which is extremely probable.

Having, as he thought, fully complied with his recognizances, Colonel Burr demanded a legal release from the court. This was refused. Learning that further and more arbitrary proceedings were intended against him by the government offi-

cials, and perceiving the utter hopelessness of attempting to proceed, and that his presence must embarrass, but could not assist this band, he resolved to fly. Disguising himself in the dress of a boatman, he crossed to the eastern side of the Mississippi and disappeared in the wilderness.

At the meeting of the court on the following morning, he, of course, did not present himself, and there was a great show of surprise. The governor, who, it is said, had connived at his escape, promptly offered two thousand dollars for his arrest. Two or three days passed without any tidings of the fugitive, though the surrounding country was scoured by parties in search. At length, a colored boy was seen, opposite where the flotilla lay, riding one of Burr's horses, and wearing an overcoat that had been his. He was seized forthwith, and thoroughly searched. Sewed in the cape of the coat was found a note addressed to "C. T. and D. F." (Comfort Tyler and Davis Floyd, leading men in the expedition), which read as follows: "If you are yet together, keep so, and I will join you to-morrow night. In the mean while, put all your arms in perfect order. Ask no questions of the bearer, but tell him all you may think I wish to know. He does not know that this is from me, nor where I am."

In consequence of this discovery, Burr's men were arrested, placed under guard, and kept as prisoners until the alarm was over. But no further trace of the chief was seen in the neighborhood. He had left the vicinity, and was making his way through a dismal wilderness, toward the port of Pensacola, where lay a British man-of-war, in which he hoped to find a temporary refuge.

Blennerhassett, after his discharge from custody, returned homeward, and had reached Kentucky, when he was again arrested and committed to prison, on a charge of treason. Others of Burr's confederates, who had the means, returned to the eastern States, and forgot the dream of glory in the pursuits of civil life. A large number of the band remained in the Territory, supplying it, as the Attorney-General afterward remarked, with a superfluity of school-masters, music-masters, and dancing-masters, for many years. The narrative of these

events, published in all the newspapers of the land, drew public attention to the south-western Territories of the Union, and attracted (says Dr. Monette, the historian of the Valley of the Mississippi) thousands of emigrants thither from the Atlantic and western States.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ARREST.

Burr Recognized — The Pursuit — Burr Captivates the Sheriff — Interview Between Burr and Captain Gaines — The Arrest — Burr's Deportment as a Prisoner — His Departure from Fort Stoddart — The Journey through the Wilderness — Anecdote — Burr's Appeal to the People — Arrival at Richmond — Examination Before Chief Justice Marshall — Burr Defends Himself — Admitted to Bail — Jefferson.

On a cold evening in February, two young lawyers were playing backgammon in a cabin of the village of Wakefield, Washington county, Alabama. The hour of ten had arrived, and they were still absorbed in the game, when the distant tramp of horses arrested their attention. Two travelers rode up to the door, one of whom, without dismounting, inquired for the tavern. It was pointed out to him. He then asked the road to Colonel Hinson's, a noted resident of the vicinity. One of the lawyers, Perkins by name, replied that the house was seven miles distant, the road exceedingly difficult to find, and there was a dangerous creek to be crossed.

While he was explaining the road, the light of their pine-wood fire flashed occasionally upon the countenance of the traveler, who had asked the questions. Perkins gazed upon the face as though it fascinated him. The eyes of the stranger sparkled like diamonds, as he sat, composed and erect, upon a superb horse, better caparisoned than was usual in the wilderness. His dress was the rude homespun of the country, but the quick eye of Perkins observed that his boots were far too elegantly shaped, and of materials much too fine, to accord with the coarse, ill-cut, pantaloons from which they protruded.

The travelers rode on. Perkins's suspicions were aroused. The striking features of the man with whom he had conversed, the incongruity of his dress, his superior air, the lateness of

the hour for strangers to be abroad in a region so wild and unknown, all confirmed the impression which had been left on his mind. Rushing into the cabin, he exclaimed,

"That is Aaron Burr! I have read a description of him in the proclamation. I can not be mistaken. Let us follow him to Hinson's, and take measures for his arrest."

His companion, not so easily moved, ridiculed the project of pursuing a traveler at so late an hour, merely on a conjecture; and, in short, refused to go. But Perkins, not deterred from his purpose, hastened to a neighboring cabin, roused the sheriff of the county, and told him his story. In a few minutes the two men were equipped and mounted, and rode off at a rapid pace through the pine woods.

The mysterious travelers, meanwhile, made their way to Colonel Hinson's residence. Hinson was absent from home. His wife, roused by their halloo, rose, peeped through a small window, and, seeing by their holsters and accoutrements that they were strangers, made no reply to them, but quietly closed the window, and returned to bed. The strangers alighted and entered the kitchen, where a cheerful fire was still burning.

Shortly after Perkins and the sheriff came in sight of the house. The former remained behind in the woods, while the sheriff went forward to reconnoiter, agreeing to return to Perkins as soon as he should have discovered any thing of importance. According to custom, the sheriff hailed the house, when the lady, reassured by hearing a well-known voice, descended to entertain her midnight guests.

The sheriff entered the kitchen, the strangers eyeing him keenly. Supper was soon ready, and the party sat down to it, Perkins, meanwhile, shivering in the woods, and wondering that his confederate did not return. As the meal progressed, the traveler with the sparkling eyes led the conversation in so sprightly a manner, was so polite and grateful to the lady, and made himself so agreeable generally, that the heart of the sheriff relented. He came to arrest, and remained to admire. The lady, too, was charmed with her guest's amiable manners. The repast ended, the captivating stranger returned to the kitchen fire, leaving his companion at the table. Now

was the sheriff's opportunity. Whispering his suspicions to the lady of the house, he induced her to make the important inquiry.

"Have I not," said she to the traveler who still sat at the table, "the honor of entertaining Colonel Burr, the gentleman who has just walked out?"

The individual addressed (a country guide) not being an adept in diplomacy, showed palpable signs of embarrassment at the question. He made no reply whatever, but immediately rejoined his companion in the kitchen. The subject was not resumed. After some further, and very agreeable courteous conversation, the strangers went to bed, and the sheriff, unwilling to encounter the impetuosity of Perkins, and resolved to take no part in arresting so amiable a gentleman, stretched himself before the fire, and slept. In the morning the traveler breakfasted, inquired the road to Pensacola, thanked the lady, again and again, for her hospitable attentions, and rode off, the sheriff actually accompanying them as their guide for a short distance before returning home.

Perkins remained at his post in the woods until his patience was exhausted. Suspecting, at last, that his confederate had fallen a prey to the blandishments of a man renowned for his seductive manners, this indomitable son of the wilderness was only the more resolved upon effecting the arrest. Riding, with furious haste, to Mannahubba Bluff, he borrowed a canoe and a negro from a friend, paddled down the Alabama, and arrived, as the day was breaking, at Fort Stoddart. Rushing into the fort, he informed the commandant, Captain Gaines (afterward the well-known Major-General Gaines) of his suspicions. Gaines entered into Perkins's project with such spirit, that by sunrise, with a file of dragoons, he and Perkins rode out of the fort toward the Pensacola road.

About nine in the morning, they met the two travelers descending a hill, not more than two miles from Hinson's house, when Captain Gaines rode forward and addressed the suspected personage.

"I presume, sir," said he, "that I have the honor of addressing Colonel Burr."

"I am a traveler in the country," replied the stranger, "and do not recognize your right to ask such a question."

Whereupon, Gaines said, "I arrest you at the instance of the federal Government."

"By what authority do you arrest a traveler upon the highway, on his own private business?" asked the stranger.

"I am an officer of the army," answered the captain. "I hold in my hands the proclamations of the President and the Governor, directing your arrest."

"You are a young man," rejoined the traveler, "and may not be aware of the responsibilities which result from arresting travelers."

"I am aware of the responsibilities," said Gaines, "but I know my duty."

The traveler now broke into an animated and eloquent denunciation of those proclamations, protesting his innocence, asserting that the charges against him originated in the malevolence of his enemies, and pointing out to Gaines the liabilities he would incur if he should arrest him.

But Gaines, assuming a severe aspect, replied, "My mind is made up. You must accompany me to Fort Stoddart, where you shall be treated with all the respect due to one who has been Vice-President of the United States, so long as you make no attempt to escape from me."

The traveler looked at him for a few moments, apparently surprised at this unwonted firmness; then, with an inclination of the head, indicated his willingness to accompany the young officer. He bade good-by to his guide, who returned to Wakefield, wheeled his horse round, and rode by the captain's side towards the fort, conversing on the way, with his usual nonchalance, on ordinary topics. Arriving at the fort early in the evening, Colonel Burr — for Colonel Burr it was — was shown to a room, where he dined alone, and sat reading to a late hour, while the tread of the sentinel was heard without.

In the night, it is related, he heard a groan in the room adjoining. He left his book, and, entering the apartment, saw the sick brother of Captain Gaines lying in bed. He spoke tenderly to the sufferer, inquired his complaint, felt of his

pulse, told him he had traveled much, and knew something of medicine, and offered his services. The sick man revived under his gentle touch and encouraging tones, and entered into conversation with his distinguished nurse. Burr made many inquiries of the patient, who was a Choctaw trader, respecting the Indians, their ways, and commerce. The conversation was singularly cheerful and pleasant, and completely won the good will of the sick merchant.

The next day Colonel Burr was presented to the wife of the commandant, dined with the family, played several games of chess with the lady, and bore himself, in all respects, as he would have done in a drawing-room of Philadelphia or New York. Every night he sat by the bedside of Mr. Gaines, administering his medicines, and cheering him by his animated, intelligent conversation. The patient became warmly attached to him, and mourned deeply over his many misfortunes; but, with all their intimacy and fondness, not the slightest allusion to Burr's situation ever passed the lips of either. Day by day, the prisoner mingled gayly in the narrow circle of the fort, played his games of chess, won every one's heart, and appeared to give himself no concern respecting the future.

Two weeks passed. Captain Gaines had resolved to send his prisoner direct to the seat of government, a thousand miles distant, four or five hundred miles of which lay through a nearly unbroken wilderness. He had been busy during those two weeks in preparing an expedition for the safe conduct of the prisoner, and on the 5th of March his arrangements were complete, and the journey was begun. The tears of the ladies residing at the fort fell fast as Colonel Burr, escorted by a file of soldiers, went down to the shore and embarked on board the boat provided for the ascent of the Alabama. He had no enemies there. The men could have no ill-will to one whose offense had been a desire to terminate the hateful rule of the Spaniards; and women were always and everywhere his friends. As the boat, with its crew of soldiers, glided past the few houses on the river's bank, all the ladies, it is said, waved their handkerchiefs, except those who

were obliged to put those weapons to a tenderer use. One of the ladies of the Alabama named her infant Aaron Burr; and he was not the only young gentleman in the South-west who bore through life a similar record of the events amid which he was born.

Above Lake Tensau, the party disembarked, and the prisoner was formally given into the custody of the guard who were to conduct him through the wilderness to the Atlantic States. This guard consisted of nine men, commanded by the redoubtable Perkins, who had selected and equipped the party. Before taking the final plunge into the forest, Perkins, fearful of Burr's fascinating powers, and mindful of their recent effect upon his friend the sheriff, took his band aside, warned them of the danger, required from each a solemn promise to steel his soul against the prisoner's winning arts, and indeed to avoid all conversation with him, except such as should be strictly necessary. All having given their word of honor to the effect required, the order was given to prepare for an immediate start.

The prisoner still wore the dress in which he had fled from the Mississippi. It consisted, we are told,* of coarse, homespun pantaloons of the color of copperas, a jacket of common drab cloth, and an old hat, with a broad, flapping brim. It was said, as he bestrode the superb horse which he had ridden at the time of his capture, his hat hanging over his face, but not concealing his brilliant eyes, that his appearance and bearing were as distinguished as when, seated in the chair of office, he had presided over the Senate of the United States. When the guard had mounted, and the word was given to march, he said good-by to the few by-standers in a cheerful voice, and took the place assigned him in the file.

The party struck into the woods by the Indian trail, and marched, from necessity, in the Indian manner — the gigantic Perkins at the head of the line, the prisoner in the middle.

* Most of the facts and incidents relating to Burr's arrest, were derived from the excellent history of Alabama, by Mr. A. J. Pickett, who collected them from eye-witnesses, or from persons to whom they had been related by eye-witnesses.

At night, the only tent carried by the party was pitched and assigned to Burr, who slept guarded by armed men and lulled by the howling of innumerable wolves. He slept soundly. Rising with the dawn, the first to be in readiness for the day's march, he took his place with alacrity in the line. The men were very attentive to his wants, and treated him with the respect due rather from an escort than a guard. He, on his part, was most courteous to them, and a kind of silent friendship grew up between them.

It was a perilous and fatiguing march. For several days in succession, the chilling spring rains fell in torrents upon the unprotected horsemen, swelling the rivulets to rivers, and the creeks to rushing floods. Sometimes, the whole party were swimming their horses over a rapid stream. Often, they toiled wearily through mire, more dangerous than the flood itself. Hundreds of Indians thronged their pathway. But, amid angry elements, wild beasts, vast swamps, boundless forests, and treacherous savages, the dauntless Perkins held his course, marching swiftly at the head of his company, and urging them along at the rate of forty miles a day. In the journey through Alabama, says the historian of that State, the party always slept in the woods, near swamps of reeds, upon which the horses, "belled and hobbled," fed during the night. "After breakfast, it was their custom again to mount their horses and march on, with a silence which was sometimes broken by a remark about the weather, the creeks, or the Indians. Burr sat firmly in the saddle, was always on the alert, and was a most excellent rider. Although drenched for hours with cold and clammy rain, and at night extended upon a thin pallet, on the bare ground, after having accomplished a ride of forty miles, yet, in the whole distance to Richmond, this remarkable man was never heard to complain that he was sick, or even fatigued."

It was ten days before they reached again the abodes of the white man. Occasionally, as they approached the settlements, they would find an Indian in possession of a crossing place on a river, with canoes for the conveyance of travelers. Then, they would place their stores in the canoes, and paddle over,

leading their swimming horses. The first roof that sheltered the party was that of a small tavern, near Fort Wilkinson, on the river Oconee, about eighty miles from the boundary line between Georgia and South Carolina. The arrival of so extraordinary a party at this remote place of entertainment seems to have astonished the landlord. While breakfast was getting ready, and the guard and their prisoner were sitting quietly around the fire, he began to ask them a series of extremely disagreeable questions. Learning that they came from the Tombigbee settlement, he hit at once upon the prevailing topic, and asked the news respecting Aaron Burr, the traitor! Had he yet been arrested? Was he not a very bad man? Was not every body afraid of him? To these and other questions of the kind, Perkins and his men could make no reply, but hung down their heads in extreme embarrassment, full of sympathy for their captive. Burr, who was sitting in a corner near the fire, raised his head, and, fixing his blazing eyes upon the unsuspecting landlord, said,

"I am Aaron Burr — what is it you want with me?"

The poor landlord, amazed at the information, and struck with the majestic manner of the man, stood aghast, and, without a syllable of reply, glided about the house, offering the party the most obsequious attentions.

Two days more brought them to the confines of South Carolina, where Burr from of old had been a popular favorite, and where, on his visits to Theodosia, he had ever been warmly welcomed, and made many personal friends. Perkins knew the difficulty he should have in conveying, with such a force as his, a prisoner like Burr through that State, and he exhorted his men to renewed vigilance. By keeping well to the north, he avoided the larger settlements until he reached the district of Chester, which was only one day's march from North Carolina. As he approached the principal village of this district, he halted the party, and changed the order of their march, placing two men in front of the prisoner, two more behind, and one at each side of him. In this manner they proceeded, without incident, until they passed near a tavern, before which a considerable number of persons were

standing, while music and dancing were heard from within. Here, Burr threw himself from his horse, and exclaimed in a loud voice,

"I am Aaron Burr, under military arrest, and claim the protection of the civil authorities."

Perkins snatched his pistols from his holster, sprang to the ground, and in an instant was at the side of his prisoner. With a pistol in each hand, he sternly ordered him to remount.

"*I will not!*" shouted Burr in his most defiant manner.

Perkins, unwilling to shed blood, but resolute to execute the commission intrusted to him, threw his pistols upon the ground, caught the prisoner round the waist with the resistless grasp of a frontiersman, and threw him into the saddle. One of the guard seizing the bridle of Burr's horse, led him rapidly away, and the whole party swept through the village in a mass, and disappeared, before the group of spectators had recovered from their astonishment at the scene.

A mile or two beyond the village, Perkins halted the party to consult with his comrades. Burr was wild with excitement. The indifference of the people, the personal indignity he had suffered, the thought of his innocence of any violation of the law, the triumph his enemies were about to have over him, all rushed upon his mind, and, for a minute, unmanned him. Perkins used to say that, when the party halted, he found his prisoner in a flood of tears, and that the man who led his horse, touched by the spectacle of fallen greatness, was also crying. It may have been so. Never had mortal man to endure more of what is called *mortification* than Aaron Burr at that moment; and if, for an instant, he lost that amazing self-command which he exhibited all through his unexampled misfortunes, it was pardonable, and it was but once.

After conversing with his men, Perkins sent them forward with the prisoner, under the command of his lieutenant, and returned himself to Chester, where he bought a gig, and rejoined the party before night. Burr was then transferred to the vehicle, with one of the guard to drive, and, in that manner, traveled the remainder of the distance. At Frederics-

burg, Perkins was met by orders from Washington to convey the prisoner to Richmond, where the party arrived on the 26th of March. They had accomplished the journey in the remarkably short period of twenty-one days. Arriving on the evening of Thursday, the prisoner was taken to the Eagle Tavern, where he remained, under guard, until Monday morning.

The morning after his arrival, he wrote a short note to his daughter, announcing the fact. "It seems," he added, "that here the business is to be tried and concluded. I am to be surrendered to the civil authority to-morrow, when the question of bail is to be determined. In the mean time, I remain at the Eagle Tavern."

A letter which he wrote to her some days after is worthy of note. It was long a puzzle in my mind, whether the following passage was written in joke or earnest. It was undoubtedly written in earnest. He really felt *just so* respecting his own character and conduct: "You have read to very little purpose if you have not remarked that such things happen in all democratic governments. Was there in Greece or Rome a man of virtue and independence, and supposed to possess great talents, who was not the object of vindictive and unrelenting persecution? Now, madame, I pray you to amuse yourself by collecting and collating all the instances to be found in ancient history, which you may connect together, if you please, in an essay, with reflections, comments, and applications. * * * I promise myself great pleasure in the perusal, and I promise you great satisfaction and consolation in the composition."

Theodosia, as may be imagined, was overwhelmed by this new calamity. How fondly she had indulged in the dream that her father's misfortunes were at an end, and that she should see him the glorious and powerful head of a nation created by his own genius! Or, if not that, yet the leading spirit of a prosperous and refined community, of which she, too, should be a member! For many days, she forgot her father's countless exhortations to fortitude, and remained stupefied with sorrow. She recovered her serenity, ere long, and had then

no thought but to fly to Richmond to be at his side during the scenes that were before him. In a few weeks she and her husband began their melancholy journey northward.

On Monday, Major Scott, the marshal of the district, attended by two deputies, waited upon the prisoner, and, with the utmost respectfulness of manner, conducted him, "through an awfully silent and attentive assemblage of citizens," to another apartment of the hotel, where he was brought before Chief Justice Marshall for examination. This examination was merely preliminary to commitment, which was strenuously opposed by Burr and his counsel.

In a brief but forcible speech, Colonel Burr denied that there was the smallest ground for even an accusation against him. The country, he said, had been causelessly alarmed. Wilkinson had alarmed the President, and the President had alarmed the country. He appealed to facts which were known to all; to the history of his arrangements in the West; to the promptness with which he had met every charge; and to the unanimity with which juries had acquitted him. If there had been any cause of alarm, it must have been known to the people in that part of the country where his offense was said to have been committed. The manner of his descent of the river was proof enough that his object was purely peaceable and agricultural. He declared that all his designs were honorable, and calculated to be beneficial to the United States. His flight, as it was termed, had been mentioned as a proof of guilt; but it was only from the resistless arm of military despotism that he had fled. Was it his duty to remain surrounded by armed men assembled for his unlawful capture? He thought not. He took the advice of his best friends, pursued the dictates of his own judgment, and abandoned a country where the laws had ceased to be the sovereign power. The charge stated in a handbill, that he had forfeited his recognizance, was false. He had forfeited no recognizance. If he had forfeited any recognizance, why had no proceedings taken place for the breach of it? If he was to be prosecuted for such breach, he wished to know why he was brought to this place? Why not carry him to the place where the

breach happened? More than three months had elapsed since the order of government had issued to seize and bring him to that place; yet it was pretended, that sufficient time had not been allowed to adduce testimony in support of the prosecution. He asked why the guard, who conducted him to that place, avoided every magistrate on the way, unless from a conviction that they were acting without lawful authority? Why had he been debarred the use of pen and ink, and paper, and not even permitted to write to his daughter? In the State of South Carolina, where he happened to see three men together, he demanded the interposition of the civil authority; it was from military despotism, from the tyranny of a military escort, that he wished to be delivered, not from an investigation into his conduct, or from the operation of the laws of his country.

After an argument of three days' duration, the Chief Justice decided to commit the prisoner on the charge of misdemeanor only, leaving the charge of treason to be investigated by the grand jury. By this decision Colonel Burr was freed from the immediate apprehension of imprisonment. Five gentlemen of Richmond gave bonds in the sum of ten thousand dollars for the appearance of the prisoner at the next circuit court of the United States, to be held at Richmond on the 22d of May. He was then discharged from custody.

Innocent as he was of the slightest infraction of the law, he now saw that it was necessary to prepare for an arduous conflict in the court. It was not merely that the deposition of Eaton and the dispatches of Wilkinson had turned the tide of public opinion so strongly against him, that an unbiased jury could not be found in all Virginia. The serious circumstance was, that the President, by his proclamations and by his messages to Congress, had conspicuously committed himself to the opinion of Burr's guilt. He had so frightened the country from its propriety, that to escape being overwhelmed with ridicule, he must get his prisoner convicted of the fell designs which he had publicly attributed to him. Not that Jefferson had the least doubt of Burr's guilt. His familiar letters written in the spring of 1807, show that he implicitly believed the

story he had told the people. "Burr's enterprise," wrote Jefferson, January 11th, "is the most extraordinary since the days of Don Quixote. It is so extravagant that those who know his understanding would not believe it if the proofs admitted doubt. He has meant to place himself on the throne of Montezuma, and extend his empire to the Alleghany, seizing on New Orleans as the instrument of compulsion for our western States."

How nonsensical is this! What impossibilities does this closet-wise man attribute to his late companion and rival! By what means imaginable could the western States be *compelled* to yield submission to a usurper at New Orleans? The States of this Union are so constituted and circumstanced, that treason of the kind attributed to Aaron Burr is a simple and manifest impossibility! There is no part of Jefferson's long and glorious career in which he appears to so little advantage as during the period we are now considering. His mind was absurdly excited. One of his letters to Senator Giles, written a few days after Burr's first examination at Richmond, speaks of the *tricks* of the judges in hastening the trial so as to clear Burr; rails at the Federalists, saying that they were *disappointed* at Burr's failure to rend the Union. If, said he, Burr had succeeded ever so partially, the Federalists were ready to join him in the attempt to overthrow "this hated republic," and introduce "their favorite monarchy." At first, he adds, the Federalists accused the President of permitting "treason to stalk through the land in open day;" but *now*, they complain because he crushed it before it had ripened to an overt act. "As if an express could go to Natchez, or to the mouth of the Cumberland, and return, in five weeks, to do which has never taken less than twelve." He proceeds to denounce the federal judges, of whom John Marshall was the chief, in a manner which shows that philosophers are sometimes angry, and that sages are not always wise. He wrote also to Governor Pinckney of South Carolina, telling him that Alston was implicated with Burr, had traveled, solicited, endorsed for Burr; and inquiring whether it would be advisable to take any measures against him. In one word, the real prosecutor of Aaron

Burr, throughout this business, was Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, who was made President of the United States by Aaron Burr's tact and vigilance, and who was able therefore to wield against Aaron Burr the power and resources of the United States.

It was not without truth, then, that Colonel Burr wrote in the early stages of the trial: "The most indefatigable industry is used by the agents of government, and they have money at command without stint. If I were possessed of the same means, I could not only foil the prosecutors, but render them ridiculous and infamous. The democratic papers teem with abuse against me and my counsel, and even against the Chief Justice. Nothing is left undone or unsaid which can tend to prejudice the public mind, and produce a conviction without evidence. The machinations of this description which were used against Moreau in France were treated in this country with indignation. They are practiced against me in a still more impudent degree, not only with impunity, but with applause; and the authors and abettors suppose, with reason, that they are acquiring favor with the administration."

CHAPTER XXV.

THE INDICTMENT.

THE CONCOURSE AT RICHMOND — GENERAL JACKSON DENOUNCES JEFFERSON — WINFIELD SCOTT IN THE COURT-ROOM — THE LAWYERS — GEORGE HAY — WILLIAM WIRT — MACRAE — BURR'S MANNER AND APPEARANCE IN COURT — EDMUND RANDOLPH — WILLIAM WICKHAM — LUTHER MARTIN — BENJAMIN BOTTS — JACK BAKER — THE GRAND JURY — MOTION TO COMMIT — THE ARGUMENT — WIRT'S SPEECH — BURR'S REPLY — WAITING FOR WILKINSON — TREASON DEFINED — THE SUBPŒNA DUCES TECUM — INDICTMENTS FOUND — BURR IN PRISON — THEODOSIA'S ARRIVAL — BARNEY'S RECOLLECTIONS.

THE court convened on the appointed day, May 22d, 1807. Richmond, itself a city of six thousand inhabitants, and the social metropolis of Virginia, was thronged with strangers — all eager to witness the opening scenes of a trial more remarkable than any which had yet taken place in the infant republic. Besides the magnates of Virginia, General Jackson was there, full of wrath against the administration for its persecution of his innocent friend, the prisoner. The story that Colonel Burr, in his later years, used often to tell of General Jackson's mounting the steps of a corner grocery at Richmond, and declaiming furiously against Jefferson for the part he had taken in crushing the expedition and its author, is confirmed by the testimony of the most distinguished of the living public men of the United States. "As I was crossing the court-house green," said this gentleman to the writer, "I heard a great noise of haranguing at some distance off. Inquiring what it was, I was told it was a great blackguard from Tennessee, one Andrew Jackson, making a speech for Burr, and damning Jefferson as a persecutor." Besides Jackson, there were a number of Burr's friends from New York, and a host of persons from the West who had been his confederates, and who were now summoned as witnesses against him. Includ-

ing witnesses, jurymen, and lawyers, there were not less than two hundred persons in Richmond who had some official connection with the trial.

The struggles for admission to the hall were terrible. So great was the number of distinguished persons claiming seats within the bar, that lawyers of twenty years' standing were excluded from their accustomed places, and thought themselves fortunate to get within the walls. John Randolph, Senator Giles, and many other public men, were present. Among the young gentlemen of the town who had succeeded in forcing their way into the room was Winfield Scott, then just admitted to the bar. He stood on the massive lock of the great door, above the crowd, in full view of the prisoner, who observed and long remembered the towering form of the most magnificent youth in Virginia.

Two judges sat upon the bench, John Marshall, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and Cyrus Griffin, Judge of the District of Virginia. The Chief Justice, in his fifty-second year (one year older than the prisoner), was a tall, slender man, with a majestic head, without one gray hair, with eyes the finest ever seen, except Burr's, large, black, and brilliant beyond description. It was often remarked during the trial, that two such pairs of eyes had never looked into one another before. The soul of dignity and honor, prudent, courageous, alive to censure, but immovably resolute to do right, John Marshall was the Washington of the bench. Not a brilliant man, not a great man, but an honest man, and a just judge. Jefferson, with his strange convictions of Burr's guilt, could not, and never could, comprehend the decisions of the Chief Justice upon this trial. He so far forgot himself as to insinuate that party feelings influenced those decisions of the Chief Justice; as though John Marshall, the Federalist, could be biased *in favor* of the man who had deprived his party of its chief, and himself of an honored and valued friend! Gentlemen of the profession who witnessed the trial, who saw the effective dignity with which the judge presided over the court, who heard him read those opinions, so elaborate and right, though necessarily prepared on the spur of

the moment, regarded it as the finest display of judicial skill and judicial rectitude which they had ever beheld.

The counsel employed in the case comprised the ablest men of the bar of Virginia, with one powerful recruit from Maryland. First in technical rank, but neither first nor second in ability, was George Hay, the prosecuting attorney. He was Colonel Monroe's son-in-law; a warm Jeffersonian; much addicted to the production of those long-winded political disquisitions of which the readers of that age were so fond; a most respectable and zealous man, but, on this occasion, "overweighted." He did his best with an impossible cause, against five of the ablest lawyers of the day; but, with the aid of almost daily letters from Jefferson, teeming with suggestions for the conduct of the case, he showed incompetence at every stage of the proceedings. He was assisted by William Wirt, then only thirty-five years of age, just rising into eminence, but greatly and justly admired at the Richmond bar for his splendid declamation. Among the lawyers assembled that day within the bar, there was not one whose rising to speak so instantaneously hushed the spectators to silence as his. A handsome, fortunate, happy, brilliant, high-minded man was William Wirt, the toil of whose life-time it was to achieve those solid attainments which alone make brilliancy of utterance endurable in a court of justice. At the personal request of Jefferson himself, Mr. Wirt undertook to aid the prosecution, and he did it yeoman's service. Alexander MacRae, the third on the side of the government, was the son of a Scotch parson who was distinguished in the revolutionary war, first, for being himself a hot Tory, and, secondly, for being the father of seven sons, all of whom were ardent Whigs. MacRae was a lawyer of respectable ability and a sharp tongue — sharp from ill-nature more than wit. At the time of the trial he was Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia.

On the other side, the array of celebrity and talent was imposing in the extreme. The real leader of the defense was Burr himself, though the burden of the work fell upon others. Not a step was taken, not a point conceded, without his express concurrence. He appeared in court attired with scru-

pulous neatness, in black, with powdered hair and queue. His manner was dignity itself — composed, polite, confident, impressive. He had the air of a man at perfect peace with himself, and simply intent upon the business of the scene. It was observed that he never laughed at the jokes of the counsel, which, at some stages of the trial, were numerous and good. His speeches were short, concise, exact. They were uttered with such impressive distinctness that there are men now alive, who, after the lapse of fifty years, can repeat phrases and sentences which they heard fall from his lips during the trial. He was at home again. He was handling familiar weapons. The valley of the Mississippi was too much for him; but in a court of justice, with the law all on his side, with a judge who would decide according to law, and with such opponents as Hay, Wirt, and MacRae, he was master of the situation.

He had four assistants, each of whom were preëminent at the bar for some one qualification, or set of qualifications, calculated to be of service in the defense. Edmund Randolph, (second cousin of John Randolph) was the leader on Burr's side. He had been Attorney-General and Secretary of State under Washington; he had been Governor and Attorney-General of Virginia; he was an elderly man of great experience, much learning, some talent, and over-awing dignity of manner. John Wickham, another of Burr's defenders, was perhaps, upon the whole, the ablest lawyer then practicing at the Richmond bar. He had learning, logic, wit, sarcasm, eloquence, a fine presence, and a persuasive manner. In single endowments he was excelled, but no other man possessed such a variety of talents and resources as Wickham. Another great man on Burr's side was Luther Martin, of Maryland, who, in the single particular of legal learning, was the first lawyer of his day. His memory was as wonderful as his reading, so that his acquirements were at instantaneous command. Burr had become acquainted with him at Washington three years before, during the trial of Judge Chace, in whose defense Martin had greatly distinguished himself. He entered into the defense of Colonel Burr with a zeal which Jefferson

thought so indecent and outrageous, that he could only account for it on the supposition that Martin was implicated with Burr. He was, indeed, a somewhat coarse man, more loud than eloquent, and a mighty drinker; resembling, in many respects, Professor Porson, the capacious Oxford receptacle of Greek and wine. Another of Burr's counsel was Benjamin Botts (father of the well-known John Minor Botts, of Virginia). Mr. Botts was the youngest man on the side of the defense, but already eminent. His speciality was courage, nerve; the "bravest of all possible men," I have heard him described by a cotemporary. There was also a certain "Jack Baker," a lame man with a crutch, a merry fellow with plenty of "horse-wit" and an infectious laugh, no speaker and no lawyer, but the best of good fellows — who appeared at a later period of the trial as counsel for one of the accused.

The report of the trial, of which a brief account is now to be given, fills more than eleven hundred closely-printed octavo pages, and, of course, only the leading points, and the most interesting scenes can be given in the few pages that are appropriated to the subject in this volume.

The court was opened at half-past twelve. The very first proceedings showed how general and how decided was the conviction of the prisoner's guilt. The gentlemen who had been summoned to serve on the grand jury, upon being questioned, all admitted that the proclamations of the President, and the deposition of General Eaton, had given them strong impressions against the prisoner. One of them was Senator Giles, who had moved in the Senate the suspension of the Habeas Corpus; another was an old political and personal enemy of Burr's; and all were prepared to believe him a traitor. One of the jurymen even volunteered the statement that, upon reading Eaton's deposition in the newspapers, he had expressed himself with great warmth and indignation upon the subject, and, therefore, feeling that it would be indelicate and improper for him to serve on the grand jury, begged to be excused.

Colonel Burr said: "Under different circumstances I might think and act differently; but the industry which has been

used through this country to prejudice my cause, leaves me very little chance indeed of an impartial jury. There is very little chance that I can expect a better man to try my cause. His desire to be excused, and his opinion that his mind is not entirely free upon the case, are good reasons why he should be excused; but the candor of the gentleman, in excepting to himself, leaves me ground to hope that he will endeavor to be impartial. I pray the court to notice, from the scene before us, how many attempts have been made to prejudge my cause. On this occasion I am perfectly passive."

This gentleman was, accordingly, not excused. To Mr. Giles and a few others of the *most* prejudiced among the panel, Colonel Burr objected, and they were withdrawn. The celebrated John Randolph, being added to the panel from among the spectators, begged to be excused for the same reason, namely, that he had an impression that the prisoner was guilty of the crimes charged against him. He was retained, however, and named foreman of the jury. Late in the afternoon the requisite number of jurors was obtained, and, having been duly sworn and charged, were conducted to the apartment prepared for them.

Colonel Burr then addressed the court, and, in doing so, gave an intimation of the mode in which he had resolved to conduct the defense, and in which he did conduct it from first to last. He asked the court to instruct the grand jury as to the *admissibility* of certain evidence which, he supposed, would be laid before them. Mr. Hay objected, and hoped the court would grant no special indulgences to Colonel Burr, who stood on the same footing with every other man who had committed a crime. "Would to God," exclaimed the prisoner, "that I did stand on the same footing with every other man! This is the first time I have been permitted to enjoy the rights of a citizen. How have I been brought hither?"

The Chief Justice interposed, observing that such digressions were improper. The day being far spent, it was agreed that argument respecting the duty of the court to instruct the grand jury further, should be postponed. The court then adjourned to the following morning; the multitude dispersed;

and the prisoner, accompanied by his counsel, returned to his lodgings.

Second Day (Saturday). — Nothing was done except recognizing some newly-arrived witnesses. No witnesses were sent in to the grand jury. It now appeared that nothing effectual could be done until the arrival of General Wilkinson, who had been summoned, and was daily expected. It was thought by some that he would not dare to confront the man he was supposed to have betrayed; and meanwhile, the questions of the day at Richmond were, Has Wilkinson arrived? Has Wilkinson been heard from? What *can* have become of Wilkinson? Wilkinson was the great Expected — the Coming Man.

Third Day. — Mr. Hay was compelled again to announce that he had received no tidings of the general. He made an important motion, however, which excited one of the most eloquent debates of the whole trial. The prisoner, as the reader has been informed, was held to bail, on his first examination, merely on the charge of *misdemeanor*, in having incited a hostile attempt against a nation with which the United States were at peace. To-day, the prosecuting attorney moved the court that he be committed on the charge of high treason! "On his examination," said the attorney, "there was no evidence of an *overt act*, and he was committed for a misdemeanor only. The evidence is different now." The effect of this motion, if granted, would be the immediate introduction of *vivâ voce* evidence, and the commitment of the prisoner to jail, if the judge should deem the evidence sufficient to warrant it. It was a home-thrust, and the defense summoned all its energies to parry it.

Mr. Botts denounced the motion as a violation of an agreement which had been made between the opposing counsel, that each side should give the other notice of motions intended to be made. The counsel for the defense had not been notified of the present motion. "The fact is this," replied Mr. Hay, "Mr. Wilkinson is known to be a material witness in this prosecution; his arrival in Virginia might be announced in this city before he himself reached it. I do not pretend to

say what effect it might produce upon Colonel Burr's mind; but certainly Colonel Burr would be able to effect his escape, merely upon paying the recognizance of his present bail. My only object then was to keep his person safe, until we could have investigated the charge of treason; and I really did not know but that, if Colonel Burr had been previously apprised of my motion, he might have attempted to avoid it. But I did not promise to make this communication to the opposite counsel, because it might have defeated the very end for which it was intended."

Mr. Wickham, Mr. Randolph, and Mr. Botts were positive and vehement in opposing the motion, as unprecedented, unlawful, unjust, and cruel. Colonel Burr, they said, was in court, ready to go on with the investigation. The prosecution had had months to prepare their case, and to assemble their witnesses; and still they were not ready. They desired to waive the prosecution, and institute, in its stead, an oppressive inquisition, against which the prisoner would have no means of defense.

In reply to these gentlemen, Mr Wirt, for the first time, addressed the court, and spoke with remarkable fluency and animation. That he believed Colonel Burr a guilty man, is shown by the harshness of his manner whenever, throughout the trial, he had occasion to refer directly to him.

"Where is the crime," said Mr. Wirt, "of considering Aaron Burr as subject to the ordinary operation of the human passions? Toward any other man, it seems, the attorney would have been justifiable in using precautions against alarms and escapes: it is only improper when applied to this man. Really, sir, I recollect nothing in the history of his deportment, which renders it so very incredible that Aaron Burr would fly from a prosecution.

"Sir, if Aaron Burr be innocent, instead of resisting this motion, he ought to hail it with triumph and exultation. What is it that we propose to introduce? Not the rumors that are floating through the world, nor the *bulk* of the multitude, nor the speculations of newspapers: but the *evidence of facts*. We propose that the whole evidence, exculpatory as

well as accusative, shall come before you; instead of exciting, this is the true mode of correcting prejudices. The world, which it is said has been misled and inflamed by falsehood, will now hear the truth. Let the truth come out, let us know how much of what we have heard is false, how much of it is true; how much of what we feel is prejudice, how much of it is justified by fact. Whoever before heard of such an apprehension as that which is professed on the other side? *Prejudice excited by evidence!* Evidence, sir, is the great corrector of prejudice. Why then does Aaron Burr shrink from it? It is strange to me that a man, who complains so much of being, without cause, illegally seized and transported by a military officer, should be afraid to confront this evidence. Evidence can be promotive only of truth. I repeat it then, sir, why does he shrink from the evidence? The gentlemen on the other side can give the answer. On our part, we are ready to produce that evidence.

"The gentleman assures us that no imputation is meant against the government. Oh, no, sir; Colonel Burr indeed has been oppressed, has been persecuted; but far be it from the gentleman to charge the government with it. Colonel Burr indeed has been harassed by a military tyrant, who is 'the instrument of a government bound to a blind obedience;' but the gentleman could not by any means be understood as intending to insinuate aught to the prejudice of the government. The gentleman is understood, sir; his object is correctly understood. He would divert the public attention from Aaron Burr, and point it to another quarter. He would, too, if he could, shift the popular displeasure which he has spoken of, from Aaron Burr to another quarter. These remarks were not intended for your ear, sir; they were intended for the people who surround us; they can have no effect upon the mind of the court. I am too well acquainted with the dignity, the firmness, the illumination of this bench, to apprehend any such consequence. But the gentlemen would balance the account of popular prejudices; they would convert this judicial into a political question; they would make it a question between Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr. The

purpose is well understood, sir; but it shall not be served. I will not degrade the administration of this country by entering on their defense. Besides, sir, this is not our business; at present we have an account to settle, not between Aaron Burr and Thomas Jefferson, but between Aaron Burr and the laws of his country. Let us finish his trial first. The administration, too, will be tried before their country; before the world. They, sir, I believe, will never shrink, either from the evidence or the verdict.

"Why is not General Wilkinson here? The *certainty* that Aaron Burr would be put upon his trial, could not have been known at Washington till the 5th or 6th of April. Now, sir, let the gentlemen on the other side make a slight calculation. Orleans is said to be fifteen hundred or sixteen hundred miles from this place. Suppose the United States mail, traveling by a frequent change of horses and riders, a hundred miles per day, should reach Orleans in seventeen days from the federal city, it would be the 24th or 25th of April (putting all accidents out of the question) before General Wilkinson could have received his orders to come on. Since that time until this, he has had thirty days to reach Richmond. Could a journey of fifteen hundred or sixteen hundred miles be reasonably performed in thirty days? Who can bear a journey of fifty miles per day for thirty days together."

Mr. Hay followed in an elaborate speech. To him, as to Mr. Wirt, the counsel for the defense, replied, and Colonel Burr concluded the debate in a ten minutes' speech. He declared himself, not only willing, but anxious to proceed — but *not* to proceed in the way proposed. On a motion for commitment, *ex parte* evidence alone would be introduced, and he would not submit to go on at such disadvantage, when the result involved such consequences to himself. "My counsel," said he, "have been charged with declamation against the government of the United States. I certainly, sir, shall not be charged with declamation; but surely it is an established principle, that no government is so high as to be beyond the reach of criticism; and it is particularly laid down, that this vigilance is more peculiarly necessary, when any government

institutes a prosecution; and one reason is, on account of the vast disproportion of means which exists between it and the accused. But, if ever there was a case which justified this vigilance, it is certainly the present one, when the government has displayed such uncommon activity. If, then, this government has been so peculiarly active against me, it is not improper to make the assertion here, for the purpose of increasing the circumspection of the court."

He observed, that he meant by persecution, the harassing of any individual, contrary to the forms of law; and that his case, unfortunately, presented too many instances of this description. His friends had been everywhere seized by the military authority; a practice truly consonant with European despotism. Persons had been dragged by compulsory process before particular tribunals, and compelled to give testimony against him. His papers, too, had been seized. And yet, in England, where we say they know nothing of liberty, a gentleman who had been seized and detained two hours in a back parlor, had obtained damages to the amount of one thousand guineas. He said that an order had been issued to kill him, as he was descending the Mississippi, and seize his property. And yet, they could only have killed his person if he had been formally condemned for treason. Even post-offices had been broken open, and robbed of his papers, in the Mississippi Territory; even an indictment was about to be laid against the postmaster. He had always taken this for a felony; but nothing seemed too extravagant to be forgiven by the amiable morality of this government. "All this," said Colonel Burr, "may only prove that my case is a solitary exception from the general rule; that government may be tender, mild, and humane, to every one but me. If so, to be sure it is of little consequence to any body but myself. But surely I may be excused if I complain a little of such proceedings." There seemed to be something mingled in those proceedings, which manifested a more than usual inclination to attain the ends of justice.

"Our President is a lawyer, and a great one too. He certainly ought to know what it is that constitutes a war. Six

months ago he proclaimed that there was a civil war. And yet, for six months have they been hunting for it, and still can not find one spot where it existed. There was, to be sure, a most terrible war in the newspapers; but no where else. When I appeared before the grand jury, in Kentucky, they had no charge to bring against me, and I was consequently dismissed. When I appeared for a second time, before a grand jury in the Mississippi Territory, there was nothing to appear against me; and the judge even told the United States Attorney, that if he did not send up his bill before the grand jury, he himself would proceed to name as many of the witnesses as he could, and bring it before the court. Still there was no proof of war. At length, however, the Spaniards invaded our territory, and yet, there was no war. But, sir, if there was a war, certainly no man can pretend to say that the government is able to find it out. The scene to which they have now hunted it, is only three hundred miles distant, and still there is no evidence to prove this war."

He concluded by reminding the judge, that if he should then be committed to prison, he would be obliged by law to remain there until the next term of the court, which would involve a delay of six months. The argument then rested, and the court adjourned for the day.

Fourth Day. — The Chief Justice decided, with avowed reluctance, that "if it was the choice of the prosecuting attorney to proceed with the motion" he might open his testimony; but "the court perceives and regrets that the result of this motion may be publications unfavorable to the justice and to the right decision of the case." Mr. Hay then said that he was struck with the observation of the court respecting "publications," and he was willing to enter into negotiations with the counselor for the defense with a view to avoid that "inconvenience;" that is to say, if they would consent to an amount of bail sufficiently large to insure the prisoner's appearance, he would forbear to avail himself of the decision just rendered. Colonel Burr's counsel demanding time for reflection, the court adjourned.

Fifth Day. — Mr. Hay said he had received a letter from

the counsel for the defense, positively refusing to give additional bail. He deemed it his duty, therefore, to go on with the examination of witnesses, for the purpose of securing the commitment of Colonel Burr on the charge of treason.

Now arose, as might have been foreseen, the vital question, *what evidence was admissible?*

A field-day of argument ensued, in the course of which Mr. Botts, in a manner plain to the comprehension of non-legal auditors, stated the law of the United States respecting the crime of high treason. First, he said, it must be proved that there was an actual war; a war consisting of *acts*, not of intentions. "In England," said Mr. Botts, "where conspiring the death of the king was treason, the *quo animo* formed the essence of the offense; but in America the national convention has confined treason to the act. We can not have a constructive war within the meaning of the Constitution. An intention to levy war, is not evidence that a war was levied. Intentions are always mutable and variable; the continuance of guilty intentions is not to be presumed." Secondly, the war must not only have been levied, but the prisoner must be proved to have committed an overt (open, not *covert*) act of treason in that war. "A treasonable intention to coöperate is no evidence of an actual coöperation. The act of others, even if in pursuance of his plan, would be no evidence against him. It might not be necessary that he should be present, perhaps; he must be, at the time of levying the war, coöperating by acts, or, in the language of the Constitution, be committing overt acts." Thirdly, the overt act by the accused, in an actual war, must be proved to have been committed within the district in which the trial takes place. Fourthly, the overt act must be proved by two witnesses.

The court sustained this view of the crime of treason, and refused to hear evidence of treasonable intention, until it was first proved that an *overt act* of treason had been committed. Just as in a case of murder, the fact of the *killing* must be shown before other evidence has any relevancy. That the counsel for the prosecutiou were mortified and perplexed by this decision, they took no pains to conceal. They appeared to

have drawn up their list of witnesses in the historical order; intending, first, to show the state of the prisoner's mind when the alleged treason was conceived, and then to narrate its progressive development in the order in which the events were supposed to have occurred. The decision, besides excluding all their choicest morsels of evidence, disarranged this commodious scheme.

Two of Blennerhassett's servants were examined respecting the events that took place on the island; an affidavit from New Orleans was offered as evidence, but rejected; and then, without having made the slightest progress, the court adjourned.

Sixth Day. — Luther Martin appeared, and took his place among Colonel Burr's counsel. The prosecuting attorney being convinced, to-day, of the futility of his efforts to commit the prisoner at the present stage of the case, and the Chief Justice having expressed a strong desire that "the personal appearance of Colonel Burr could be secured without the necessity of proceeding with this inquiry," Colonel Burr agreed to give bail, "provided it should be understood that no opinion, on the question even of probable cause, was pronounced by the court by the circumstance of his giving bail." This was agreed to, and the bail was doubled. One of the new sureties was Luther Martin, who declared in open court that he was happy to have this opportunity to give a public proof of his confidence in the honor of Colonel Burr, and of his conviction that he was innocent.

Days passed, and still there were no tidings of the portly Wilkinson. Here were nine of the ablest lawyers of the country, however, and the eyes of an excited nation were fixed upon them. Need it be said that there were motions enough, and talk interminable! There was talk desultory, talk animated, talk violent, talk to the purpose, and talk digressive. Martin roared against the administration, like the "Federal bull-dog" that he was; and Wirt retorted in polished and glowing declamation. Wickham, Botts, and Randolph went, by turns, into the arena, and won the applause of the bar and the crowd. One of the longest arguments was

upon a motion made by Burr, that the court issue a *subpœna duces tecum* to the President, requiring him to furnish certain papers to the counsel for the defense, namely, Wilkinson's letter to the President, dated October 21st, and the orders issued by the government to the army and navy during the late excitement. These papers (copies, of course) had been applied for by Colonel Burr himself during a recent visit to Washington. They were refused. His counsel had since applied, but they had not been obtained.

The letter applied for was the one in which Wilkinson said he did not know who the prime mover of the conspiracy was, and the orders to the army and navy were such as, in the counsels' opinion, would have *justified resistance* on the part of Colonel Burr and his companions.

"We intended to show," said Luther Martin, "in one of his vehement harangues, "that these orders were contrary to the Constitution and the laws, and that they entitled Colonel Burr to the right of resistance. We intended to show that by this particular order his property and his person were to be destroyed; yes, by these tyrannical orders the life and property of an innocent man were to be exposed to destruction. We did not expect the originals themselves. But we did apply for copies; and were refused under presidential influence. In New York, on the farcical trials of Ogden and Smith, the officers of the government screened themselves from attending, under the sanction of the President's name. Perhaps the same farce may be repeated here; and it is for this reason that we apply directly to the President of the United States. Whether it would have been best to have applied to the Secretaries of State, of the Navy and War, I can not say. All that we want is, the copies of some papers, and the original of another. This is a peculiar case, sir. The President has underatken to prejudge my client by declaring, that 'of his guilt there can be no doubt.' He has assumed to himself the knowledge of the Supreme Being himself, and pretended to search the heart of my highly respected friend. He has proclaimed him a traitor in the face of that country which has rewarded him. He has let slip the dogs of war, the

hell-hounds of persecution, to hunt down my friend. And would this President of the United States, who has raised all this absurd clamor, pretend to keep back the papers which are wanted for this trial, where life itself is at stake? It is a sacred principle, that in all such cases, the accused has a right to all the evidence which is necessary for his defense. And whoever withholds, willfully, information that would save the life of a person charged with a capital offense, is substantially a murderer, and so recorded in the register of heaven."

To which Mr. Wirt replied: "I beg to know what gentlemen can intend, expect, or hope, from these perpetual philippics against the government? Do they flatter themselves that this court feels political prejudices which will supply the place of argument and innocence on the part of the prisoner? Their conduct amounts to an insinuation of the sort. But I do not believe it. On the contrary, I feel the firm and pleasing assurance, that as to the court, the beam of their judgment will remain steady, although the earth itself should shake under the concussion of prejudice. Or is it on the by-standers that the gentlemen expect to make a favorable impression? And do they use the court merely as a canal, through which they may pour upon the world their undeserved invectives against the government? Do they wish to divide the popular resentment and diminish thereby their own quota? Before the gentlemen arraign the administration, let them clear the skirts of their client. Let them prove his innocence; let them prove that he has not covered himself with the clouds of mystery and just suspicion; let them prove that he has been all along erect and fair, in open day, and that these charges against him are totally groundless and false. That will be the most eloquent invective which they can pronounce against the prosecution; but until they prove this innocence, it shall be in vain that they attempt to divert our minds to other objects, and other inquiries. We will keep our eyes on Aaron Burr until he satisfies our utmost scruple. I beg to know, sir, if the course which gentlemen pursue is not disrespectful to the court itself? Suppose there are any foreigners here accustomed to regular government in their own country, what can

they infer from hearing the federal administration thus reviled to the federal judiciary? Hearing the judiciary told that the administration are "*blood hounds*, hunting this man with a keen and savage thirst for blood; that they now suppose they have hunted him into their toils, and have him safe.' Sir, no man, foreigner or citizen, who hears this language addressed to the court, and received with all the complacency at least which silence can imply, can make any inferences from it very honorable to the court. It would only be inferred, while they are thus suffered to roll and luxuriate in these gross invectives against the administration, that they are furnishing the joys of a Mohammedan paradise to the court as well as to their client. I hope that the court, for their own sakes, will compel a decent respect to that government of which they themselves form a branch. On our part, we wish only a fair trial of this case. If the man be innocent, in the name of God let him go; but while we are on the question of his guilt or innocence, let us not suffer our attention and judgment to be diverted and distracted by the introduction of other subjects foreign to the inquiry."

After some days of debate, the Chief Justice gave a very elaborate opinion on the point, and decided that the *subpœna duces tecum* might issue.

If the object of this motion was to annoy the President, it certainly accomplished its purpose completely. Mr. Jefferson was disgusted with the motion, disgusted with the debate, and disgusted with the decision. "Shall we move," he wrote to Mr. Hay, "to commit Luther Martin as *particeps criminis* with Burr? Grayball will fix upon him misprision of treason at least, and, at any rate, his evidence will put down this unprincipled and impudent Federal bull-dog, and add another proof that the most clamorous defenders of Burr are all his accomplices. It will explain why Luther Martin flew so hastily to the 'aid of his honorable friend,' abandoning his clients and their property during a session of a principal court of Maryland, now filled, as I am told, with the clamors and ruin of his clients."

The Chief Justice's opinion was not less offensive to the

President than Martin's philippics. He descanted, at length, upon a passage which intimated that even the bodily presence of the President might be compelled by the court. He emphatically denied this. "The Constitution," wrote the President, "enjoins the President's constant agency in the concerns of six millions of people. Is the law paramount to this which calls on him on behalf of a single one? Let us apply the judge's own doctrine to the case of himself and his brethren. The sheriff of Henrico (Judge Marshall's residence) summons him from the bench to quell a riot somewhere in his county. The federal judge is, by the general law, a part of the *posse* of the State sheriff. Would the judge abandon major duties to perform lesser ones? * * * The leading principle of our Constitution is the independence of the legislature, executive, and judiciary of each other, and none are more jealous of this than the judiciary. But would the executive be independent of the judiciary, if he were subject to the *commands* of the latter, and to imprisonment for disobedience, if the several courts could bandy him from pillar to post, keep him constantly trudging from north to south, and east to west, and withdraw him entirely from his constitutional duties? * * * The judge says, '*it is apparent* that the President's duties as chief magistrate do not demand his whole time, and are not unremitting.' If he alludes to our annual retirement from the seat of goverment, during the sickly season, he should be told that such arrangements are made for carrying on the public business that it goes on as unremittingly there as if we were at the seat of government. I pass more hours in public business at Monticello than I do here every day and it is much more laborious, because all must be done in writing."

These passages show the more than official interest that Mr. Jefferson took in the events that were transpiring at Richmond. They show who was the real prosecutor of the prisoner, and who inspired the eloquence and zeal of those who were delegated to conduct the cause.

At length on the 15th of June, twenty-four days after the opening of the court, General Wilkinson, who had arrived on

the 13th, exhausted with the fatigue of his journey, appeared in court. His bearing, it was said at the time, was serene and commanding, while the countenance of the prisoner wore an expression of ineffable contempt. Business now proceeded with more celerity. Witnesses were sworn and sent to the grand jury in scores. Prodigious efforts were made by Colonel Burr and his counsel to exclude and vitiate the testimony of General Wilkinson. But, on the 24th of June, while Mr. Botts was in the very act of urging the attachment of Wilkinson for procuring evidence by means violent, unlawful, and corrupting, the coming of the grand jury was announced, bearing the result of their investigations. With their distinguished foreman at the head of the procession, they marched into the court-room and took their places, amid the hushed and intense expectation of a crowded auditory. The grand jury, Mr. Randolph said, had agreed upon several indictments, which he handed to the clerk of the court. The clerk took them, and read aloud the endorsements upon them, which were as follows:

"An indictment against Aaron Burr for treason;" "an indictment against Aaron Burr for a misdemeanor;" "an indictment against Herman Blennerhassett for treason;" "an indictment against Herman Blennerhassett for misdemeanor."

The eyes of the auditors sought involuntarily the countenance of the prisoner. It was utterly unmoved; his manner differed in no degree whatever from that which he had exhibited at every stage of the trial. A Richmond newspaper of the following day, however, announced to a country hungry for exciting intelligence, that when the clerk read the first endorsement, the prisoner was thrown into a state of indescribable consternation and dismay.

The grand jury retired. Mr. Botts concluded his speech. An attempt was made to show that the prisoner might still be held on bail; but after debate, the Chief Justice decided that he was "under the necessity of committing Colonel Burr." Late in the afternoon, through a concourse of hundreds of spectators who looked on in silence, Colonel Burr was conducted by the marshal of the district to the city jail of Richmond.

His first thought on being conducted to his apartment in the prison was to allay the apprehensions which, he well knew, the news of his imprisonment would excite in the mind of his daughter. He wrote her a letter, showing the absurdity and groundlessness of the indictments for treason. He said, they were founded on the allegations, that "Colonel Tyler, with twenty or thirty men, stopped at Blennerhassett's Island on their way down the Ohio; that though these men were not armed, and had no military array or organization, and though they did neither use force nor threaten it, yet having set out with a view of taking temporary possession of New Orleans on their way to Mexico, that such intent was treasonable, and therefore a war was levied on Blennerhassett's Island by *construction;* and that, though Colonel Burr was then at Frankfort on his way to Tennessee, yet, having advised the measure, he was, *by construction of law*, present at the island, and levied war there." He declared, that of the fifty witnesses who had been examined by the grand jury, thirty had perjured themselves. "I beg and expect it of you," he said in conclusion, "that you will conduct yourelf as becomes my daughter, and that you manifest no signs of weakness or alarm."

On the following day, the grand jury indicted ex-senators Dayton and Smith, Comfort Tyler, Israel Smith, and Davis Floyd for the same offenses. Hour after hour, the lawyers talked their best, and occasionally, their loudest, upon the motion to attach General Wilkinson for contempt. In vain.

The next day, on the opening of the court, the counsel of the prisoner presented a paper to the judges, stating that the city jail, where their client was confined, was unhealthy and inconvenient, and was so constructed that he could not have a room to himself, which rendered it almost impossible for his counsel to consult with him. They therefore prayed that better quarters might be provided. The Governor of the State, under the advice of his counsel, having offered apartments in the penitentiary near Richmond, the Chief Justice ordered the prisoner's removal thither. This proceeding seems to have filled up the measure of Jefferson's disgust. "Before an impartial jury," he wrote to Mr. Hay, "Burr's conduct would

convict himself, were not one word of testimony to be offered against him. But to what a state will our law be reduced by party feelings in those who administer it? Why do not Blennerhassett, Dayton, and the rest, demand private and comfortable lodgings? In a country where an equal application of law to every condition of man is fundamental, how could it be denied to them? How can it ever be denied to the most degraded malefactor?"

On the 13th of June, the court, having been occupied for nearly two months in getting the prisoners simply indicted, rested from its labors, and adjourned to meet again on the 3d of August. The proceedings thus far were immediately published in a thick, three-shilling pamphlet, which seems, if we may judge from the newspapers of that day, to have confirmed the country in its impressions of the prisoner's guilt.

For example — at a Fourth-of-July celebration in Cecil county, Maryland, the following were among the toasts:

"The grand jurors lately impaneled at Richmond to indict the traitors of their country. May their zeal and patriotism in the cause of liberty secure them a crown of immortal glory, and the fruits of their labor be a death-wound to all conspirators.

"Luther Martin, the ex-attorney-general of Maryland, the mutual and highly respected friend of a convicted traitor. May his exertions to preserve the Catiline of America procure him an honorable coat of tar, and a plumage of feathers that will rival in finery all the mummeries of Egypt.

"Aaron Burr, the man who once received the confidence of a free people. May his treachery to his country exalt him to the scaffold, and hemp be his escort to the republic of dust and ashes."

To these elegant effusions of patriotic hilarity, Luther Martin replied with a spirit and audacity never employed by public men of the present day in addressing the sovereign People. "Who is this gentleman," said he, "whose guilt you have pronounced, and for whose blood your parched throats so thirst? Was he not, a few years past, adored by you next to your God? I mean your earthly god; for whether you

believe in a deity who has any government over your 'republic of dust and ashes,' I know not. Were you not, then, his warmest admirers? Did he not then possess every virtue? Had he then one sin — even a single weakness of human nature? He was then in power. He had then influence. You would then have been proud of his notice. One smile from him would have brightened up all your faces. One frown from him would have lengthened all your visages!

"Go, ye holiday, ye sunshine friends — ye time-servers — ye criers of hosannah to-day and crucifiers to-morrow — go, hide your heads, if possible, from the contempt and detestation of every virtuous, every honorable inhabitant of every clime!"

In Richmond itself, however, Colonel Burr had found friends enough. From the day of his arrival, he had been growing in the esteem and good-will of those who attended the court and saw his uniform urbanity and good humor. His situation in the penitentiary was extremely agreeable. He had a suite of three rooms in the third story, extending one hundred feet, where he was allowed to see his friends without the presence of a witness. His rooms were so thronged with visitors, at times, as to present the appearance of a levee. Servants were continually arriving "with messages, notes, and inquiries, bringing oranges, lemons, pineapples, raspberries, apricots, cream, butter, ice," and other articles — presents from the ladies of the city. In expectation of his daughter's arrival, some of his friends in the town provided a house for her accommodation. The jailor, too, was all civility. Colonel Burr often laughed at the recollection of a conversation that took place between himself and the jailor on the evening of his arrival.

"I hope, sir," said the jailor, "that it would not be disagreeable to you if I should lock this door after dark?"

"By no means," replied the prisoner; "I should prefer it, to keep out intruders."

"It is our custom, sir," continued the jailor, "to extinguish all lights at nine o'clock. I hope, sir, you will have no objection to conform to that."

"That, sir," said Burr, "I am sorry to say, is impossible, for I never go to bed till twelve, and always burn two candles."

"Very well, sir, just as you please," replied the jailor. "I should have been glad if it had been otherwise; but, as you please, sir."

Toward the close of July, he received notice of Theodosia's approach. "Remember," he wrote to her, "no agitations, no complaints, no fears or anxieties on the road, or I renounce thee." And again: "I want an independent and discerning witness to my conduct and to that of the government. The scenes which have passed and those about to be transacted will exceed all reasonable credibility, and will hereafter be deemed fables, unless attested by very high authority. I repeat, what has heretofore been written, that I should never invite any one, much less those so dear to me, to witness my disgrace. I may be immured in dungeons, chained, murdered in legal form, but I can not be humiliated or disgraced. If absent, you will suffer great solicitude. In my presence you will feel none, whatever may be the *malice* or the *power* of my enemies, and in both they abound." And again: "I am informed that some good-natured people here have provided you a house, and furnished it, a few steps from my *town-house.* I had also made a temporary provision for you in my town-house (city jail), whither I shall remove on Sunday; but I will not, if I can possibly avoid it, move before your arrival, having a great desire to *receive you all in this mansion* (the penitentiary). Pray, therefore, drive directly out here. You may get admission at any time from four in the morning till ten at night. Write me by the mail from Petersburg, that I may know of your approach."

Upon the letter last quoted was written in Theodosia's own hand: "*Received on our approach to Richmond. How happy it made me!*" She arrived the same day, and was thenceforth, until the end of the trial for treason, his companion and housekeeper. Her husband, faithful always to her and to her father, was with her, and sat by the side of her father when he was arraigned for treason.

The recollections of the late John Barney, formerly member of Congress from Maryland, confirm the view here given of Colonel Burr's position at Richmond during his trial. Mr. Barney was employed by Colonel Burr as his amanuensis, and lived in habits of intimacy with him for several weeks. With an extract from Mr. Barney's narrative, I conclude the present chapter:

"In 1803, I witnessed the dignity, impartiality, and winning grace with which Aaron Burr presided in the Senate of the United States during the trial of Judge Chace, impeached for partiality and injustice toward John Fries, indicted under the alien and sedition law.

"I attended his trial at Richmond, when he himself was indicted for treason. His prominent counselor was Luther Martin, of Baltimore, my father's lawyer, neighbor, and friend.

"His daughter Maria, afterward celebrated as Mrs. Richard Raynal Keene, invited my sister and self to dine with Colonel Burr. He was then living in a house standing alone, around which was a patrol of guards.

"The dinner was superb, abounding in all the luxuries which Virginia's generous soil yields in lavish abundance. Twenty ladies and gentlemen of rank, fortune, and fashion, graced the festive board.

"He was esteemed a persecuted martyr. Distress, in every form and shape, makes an irresistible appeal to woman's sympathy; her tears often flow for the suffering of the criminal who expiates his crimes on the gibbet.

"On this occasion, Burr's fascinating flatteries were lavished indiscriminately on the sex in general. Man he had ever found treacherous — woman always true to sustain him in adversity, solacing in affliction, and giving a charm to life, without which life itself was not worth possessing.

"The grand jury finding a true bill, he was forthwith removed to the State prison. There we followed him; he received us in his usual bland, courteous manner; apologized for our being introduced into his bed-chamber — his drawing-room being then deranged by the fitting up of his ice-house,

which was in fact in his chimney-corner. Iron gratings prevented his egress, admitting free circulation of light and air. I felt pride and took pleasure in being permitted to become his amanuensis. Each day as I rode along the streets my curricle was freighted with cake, confectionery, flowers, redolent with perfume, wreathed into fancy bouquets of endless variety.

"The trial was tedious and prolonged. I traveled on to the borders of North Carolina, lingered for awhile at the noble mansion of Lady Shipwith. On my return, I found the persevering Attorney-General, George Hay, fatigued, worried.

"'Would that I could only hang upon a gate, and have a little negro to swing me to and fro all day. The law's delay — the special pleadings of the bar, its interminable controversies have worn out and exhausted me. I shan't be able to hang Burr, but will be content to hang myself on a gate.' Thus spoke George Hay, than whom never lived a purer patriot, or a more upright, conscientious man."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TRIAL.

FOURTEEN DAYS SPENT IN GETTING A JURY—GENERAL EATON'S TESTIMONY—COMMODORE TRUXTON'S TESTIMONY—PETER TAYLOR'S TESTIMONY—JACOB ALLBRIGHT'S TESTIMONY—THE NINE DAYS' DEBATE ON THE ADMISSIBILITY OF INDIRECT EVIDENCE—WIRT'S CELEBRATED SPEECH—BLENNERHASSETT'S DIARY—DECISION OF THE CHIEF JUSTICE—THE VERDICT—LETTER OF THEODOSIA'S—THE TRIAL FOR MISDEMEANOR—BURR IN BALTIMORE.

THE court met on the 3d of August. Present, the same judges as before. Present, the same counsel. Present, an equal throng of auditors flushed with expectation. Present, more than one hundred and forty witnesses, and a panel of forty-eight jurors. Blennerhassett had arrived, and was in prison. Burr had been brought from his "country house" to a building in the city near the court-room, where he was guarded vigilantly, night and day. He entered the court-room accompanied by his son-in-law, Governor Alston, of South Carolina, and exhibited all his wonted serenity of manner.

Fourteen days elapsed before the jury were sworn. Some of these days were wasted in waiting for the arrival of witnesses, but most of them were consumed in attempting to find among the mass of jurors twelve who had not formed and *expressed* an opinion of the prisoner's guilt. One man confessed to having said that any one who did what Colonel Burr had done ought to be hung. Another had expressed the opinion that Colonel Burr had done *something* wrong, and seduced Blennerhassett into it; but that he (Burr) was so "sensible" a man, that if there was any hole left he would creep out of it. Another had long thought that the prisoner was a very bad man. Another believed him guilty of treasonable intention, but had doubts whether an overt act had been committed, because he

believed Colonel Burr to be a man of such "deep intrigue as never to jeopardize his own life until thousands fell before him." Another said that his bad opinion of Colonel Burr had been confirmed by what he had heard from his own lips in court. With one of the panel, the prisoner had the following conversation in open court:

"Have the rumors (mentioned by the juror) excited a prejudice in your mind against me?" asked Colonel Burr.

"I have no prejudice for or against you," was the reply.

Mr. Botts asked, "Are you a freeholder?"

"Yes," said the juror; "I have two patents for land."

"Are you worth three hundred dollars?" inquired one of the counsel.

"Yes; I have a house here worth the half of it."

"Have you another at home," inquired one of the counsel, jocosely, "to make up the other half?"

A general titter followed this question, which nettled the gentleman. "Yes," said he, "four of them." Then, turning to the spectators, he continued; "I am surprised that they should be in so much terror of me. Perhaps my *name* may be a terror, for my first name is HAMILTON!"

"*That* remark," said Colonel Burr, with memorable dignity, "is a sufficient cause for objecting to him. I challenge him peremptorily." And this was his only peremptory challenge.

In short, out of the whole *venire* of forty-eight, but four men were found whose opinions were sufficiently undecided to admit of their acceptance as jurors; and of those four, all but one admitted that they had been prejudiced against the prisoner. A second *venire* of forty-eight were summoned; all of whom, it was soon discovered, had formed unfavorable opinions. An attempt was made by the counsel for the defense to quash the trial, for the simple reason that an impartial jury could not be obtained, and the law requires that every prisoner shall be tried by an impartial jury. At length, the prisoner was allowed to select eight jurors from the last *venire* to add to the four obtained from the first. Some even of these confessed to being decidedly prejudiced, confessed to having

warmly denounced the prisoner on many occasions. They were accepted, however, and sworn, on the 17th of the month.

Proclamation was then made in the usual form. The prisoner stood up, while the indictment was read. Mr. Hay then rose and opened the case with a speech of great length, in which he discoursed upon the nature of treason; and, briefly, upon the treason committed by the prisoner at the bar. It would be proved, he said, that the prisoner *meant to take New Orleans*, and that the proceedings at Blennerhassett Island were the beginning of the execution of that scheme. Much more would be proved, but that alone was enough to convict the prisoner of treason. He concluded by bestowing a swelling panegyric upon General Wilkinson, as the saviour of the American people from the horrors of civil war.

General Eaton was the first witness called. He appeared and was sworn, when Colonel Burr objected to that order of examining witnesses. General Eaton was called, he said, to prove treasonable intentions, *before* it had been proved that any overt act of treason had been committed. No testimony of that kind, he contended, was admissible until the overt act had been established. This question was argued in an earnest and able manner by the counsel on both sides, for several hours, Luther Martin distinguishing himself by his familiarity with precedents and authorities. The day was consumed in this critical debate. On the following morning, the court gave its decision, as follows: "So far as General Eaton's testimony relates to the fact charged in the indictment, so far as it relates to levying war on Blennerhassett's Island, so far as it relates to a design to seize on New Orleans, or to separate by force the western from the Atlantic States, it is deemed relevant and is now admissible; so far as it respects other plans to be executed in the city of Washington, or elsewhere, if it indicate a treasonable design, it is a design to commit a distinct act of treason, and is therefore not relevant to the present indictment."

Eaton was then placed upon the stand, and examined at length. He was permitted to tell his story in his own way,

with little interruption. As it was Eaton's evidence which had most to do with convincing the public of Burr's own day that he was a traitor of the deepest dye, it is thought due to truth and to Aaron Burr, that the whole of that evidence should here be given. I omit only a passage in which the witness wandered from Burr to Barbary, and descanted upon the disappointments and wrongs he had endured in that part of the world.

"During the winter of 1805–6," he began, "Aaron Burr signified to me that he was organizing a military expedition to be moved against the Spanish provinces, on the south-western frontiers of the United States: I understood under the authority of the general government. From our existing controversies with Spain, and from the tenor of the President's communications to both Houses of Congress, a conclusion was naturally drawn, that war with that power was inevitable. I had just then returned from the coast of Africa, and having been for many years employed on our frontier, or a coast more barbarous and obscure, I was ignorant of the estimation in which Colonel Burr was held by his country. The distinguished rank he held in society, and the strong marks of confidence which he had received from his fellow citizens, did not permit me to doubt his patriotism. As a military character, I had been made acquainted with none within the United States, under whose direction a soldier might with greater security confide his honor than Colonel Burr. In case of my country's being involved in a war, I should have thought it my duty to obey so honorable a call, as was proposed to me. Under impressions like these, I did engage to embark myself in the enterprise, and pledged myself to Colonel Burr's confidence. At several interviews, it appeared to be his intention to convince me by maps and other documents, of the feasibility of penetrating to Mexico. At length, from certain indistinct expressions and innuendoes, I admitted a suspicion that Colonel Burr had other projects. He used strong expressions of reproach against the administration of the government: accused them of want of character, want of energy, and want of gratitude. He seemed desirous of irritating my resent-

ment by dilating on certain injurious strictures I had received on the floor of Congress, on account of certain transactions on the coast of Tripoli; and also on the delays in adjusting my accounts for advances of money on account of the United States; and talked of pointing out to me modes of honorable indemnity.

"I listened to Colonel Burr's mode of indemnity; and as I had by this time began to suspect that the military expedition he had on foot was unlawful, I permitted him to believe myself resigned to his influence, that I might understand the extent and motive of his arrangements. Colonel Burr now laid open his project of revolutionizing the territory west of the Alleghany; establishing an independent empire there; New Orleans to be the capital, and he himself to be the chief; organizing a military force on the waters of the Mississippi, and carrying conquest to Mexico. After much conversation, which I do not particularly recollect, respecting the feasibility of the project, as was natural, I stated impediments to his operations; such as the republican habits of the citizens of that country, their attachment to the present administration of the government, the want of funds, the opposition he would experience from the regular army of the United States stationed on that frontier, and the resistance to be expected from Miranda, in case he should succeed in republicanizing the Mexicans. Colonel Burr appeared to have no difficulty in removing these obstacles. He stated to me, that he had in person (I think the preceding season), made a tour through that country; that he had secured to his interests, and attached to his person (I do not recollect the exact expression, but the meaning, and, I believe, the words were), the most distinguished citizens of Tennessee, Kentucky, and the Territory of Orleans; that he had inexhaustible resources and funds; that the army of the United States would act with him; that it would be reinforced by ten or twelve thousand men from the above-mentioned States and Territory; that he had powerful agents in the Spanish territory, and 'as for Miranda,' said Mr. Burr, facetiously, 'we must hang Miranda.' In the course of several conversations on this subject, he proposed to give me a

distinguished command in his army; I understood him to say, the second command. I asked him who would command in chief. He said, General Wilkinson. I observed, that it was singular he should count upon General Wilkinson; the distinguished command and high trust he held under government, as the commander-in-chief of our army, and as governor of a province, he would not be apt to put at hazard for any prospect of precarious aggrandizement. Colonel Burr stated that General Wilkinson balanced in the confidence of his country; that it was doubtful whether he would much longer retain the distinction and confidence he now enjoyed; and that he was prepared to secure to himself a permanency. I asked Colonel Burr if he knew General Wilkinson. He said, yes; and echoed the question. I told him that twelve years ago I was at the same time a captain in the wing of the legion of the United States, which General Wilkinson commanded, his acting brigade-major, and aid-de-camp, and that I thought I knew him well. He asked me, what I knew of General Wilkinson. I said, I knew General Wilkinson would act as lieutenant to no man in existence. 'You are in an error,' said Mr. Burr, 'Wilkinson will act as lieutenant to me.' From the tenor of much conversation on this subject, I was prevailed on to believe that the plan of revolution meditated by Colonel Burr, and communicated to me, had been concerted with General Wilkinson, and would have his coöperation; for Colonel Burr repeatedly, and very confidently expressed his belief, that the influence of General Wilkinson with his army, the promise of double pay and rations, the ambition of his officers, and the prospect of plunder and military achievements, would bring the army generally into the measure. I pass over here a conversation which took place between Colonel Burr and myself respecting a central revolution, as it is decided to be irrelevant by the opinion of the bench."

"Mr. Hay. — You allude to a revolution for overthrowing the government at Washington, and of revolutionizing the eastern States."

"I was passing over that to come down to the period when

I supposed he had relinquished that design, and adhered to the project of revolutionizing the West."

"Mr. WICKHAM. — What project do you mean?"

"A central general revolution. I was thoroughly convinced myself that such a project was already so far organized as to be dangerous, and that it would require an effort to suppress it. For in addition to positive assurances that Colonel Burr had of assistance and coöperation, he said that the vast extent of territory of the United States, west of the Alleghany mountains, which offered to adventurers, with a view on the mines of Mexico, would bring volunteers to his standard from all quarters of the Union. The situation which these communications, and the impressions they made upon me, placed me in, was peculiarly delicate. I had no overt act to produce against Colonel Burr. He had given me nothing upon paper; nor did I know of any person in the vicinity who had received similar communications, and whose testimony might support mine. He had mentioned to me no person as principally and decidedly engaged with him but General Wilkinson; a Mr. Alston, who, I afterward learned, was his son-in-law; and a Mr. Ephraim Kibby, who, I learned, was late a captain of rangers in Wayne's army. Of General Wilkinson, Burr said much, as I have stated; of Mr. Alston, very little, but enough to satisfy me that he was engaged in the project; and of Kibby, he said that he was brigade-major in the vicinity of Cincinnati (whether Cincinnati in Ohio or in Kentucky, I know not), who had much influence with the militia, and had already engaged the majority of the brigade to which he belonged, who were ready to march at Mr. Burr's signal. Mr. Burr talked of this revolution as a matter of right, inherent in the people, and constitutional; a revolution which would rather be advantageous than detrimental to the Atlantic States; a revolution which must eventually take place; and for the operation of which the present crisis was peculiarly favorable. He said there was no energy to be dreaded in the general government, and his conversations denoted a confidence that his arrangements were so well made that he should meet with no opposition at New Orleans, for the army and

chief citizens of that place were now ready to receive him. On the solitary ground upon which I stood, I was at a loss how to conduct myself, though at no loss as respected my duty. I durst not place my lonely testimony in the balance against the weight of Colonel Burr's character; for by turning the tables upon me, which I thought any man, capable of such a project, was very capable of doing, I should sink under the weight. I resolved therefore with myself to obtain the removal of Mr. Burr from this country in a way honorable to him; and on this I did consult him, without his knowing my motive. Accordingly, I waited on the President of the United States, and after a desultory conversation, in which I aimed to draw his view to the westward, I took the liberty of suggesting to the President that I thought Colonel Burr ought to be removed from the country, because I considered him dangerous in it. The President asked where we should send him? Other places might have been mentioned, but I believe that Paris, London, and Madrid, were the places which were particularly named. The President, without positive expression (in such a matter of delicacy), signified that the trust was too important, and expressed something like a doubt about the integrity of Mr. Burr. I frankly told the President that perhaps no person had stronger grounds to suspect that integrity than I had; but that I believed his pride of ambition had so predominated over his other passions, that when placed on an eminence, and put on his honor, a respect to himself would secure his fidelity. I perceived that the subject was disagreeable to the President, and to bring him to my point in the shortest mode, and at the same time point to the danger, I said to him that I expected that we should in eighteen months have an insurrection, if not a revolution, on the waters of the Mississippi. The President said he had too much confidence in the information, the integrity, and attachment to the Union of the citizens of that country, to admit any apprehensions of that kind. The circumstance of no interrogatories being made to me, I thought imposed silence upon me at that time and place. Here, sir, I beg indulgence to declare my motives for recommending that gentleman to a foreign mission

at that time; and in the solemnity with which I stand here, I declare that Colonel Burr was neutral in my feelings; that it was through no attachment to him that I made that suggestion, but to avert a great national calamity which I saw approaching; to arrest a tempest which seemed lowering in the West; and to divert into a channel of usefulness those consummate talents, which were to mount 'the whirlwind and direct the storm.' These, and these only, were my reasons for making that recommendation.

"About the time of my having waited on the President, or a little before (I can not however be positive whether before or after), I determined at all events to have some evidence of the integrity of my intentions, and to fortify myself by the advice of two gentlemen, members of the House of Representatives, whose friendship and confidence I had the honor long to retain, and in whose wisdom and integrity I had the utmost faith and reliance. I am at liberty to give their names if required. I do not distinctly recollect, but I believe, that I had a conversation with a Senator on the subject. I developed to them all Mr. Burr's plans. They did not seem much alarmed.

"Little more passed between Colonel Burr and myself, relevant to this inquiry, while I remained at Washington; yet, though I could perceive symptoms of distrust in him toward me he was solicitous to engage me in his western plans.

"I returned to Massachusetts, to my own concerns, and thought no more of Colonel Burr, or his projects, or revolutions, until, in October last, a letter was put into my hands at Brumfield, from Mr. Belknap, of Marietta, to T. E. Danielson, of Brumfield, stating that Mr. Burr had contracted for boats which were building on the Ohio."

The cross-examination of this witness elicited nothing of importance. Colonel Burr took care to bring out the fact that General Eaton, who had been clamoring in vain for a settlement of his accounts for many months, was paid the sum of ten thousand dollars a few weeks after making the deposition respecting his conversation with Burr. That deposition appeared during the delirium of the public mind in January,

while Congress was debating the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, and while the military companies of New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Boston were offering their services to the President in defense of a country supposed to be threatened, at once by foreign and domestic foes. Colonel Burr, by a quiet question or two, also called attention to the absurdity of a man's setting up for a patriot who tried to induce the President to promote a traitor to high and responsible office, and who, cognizant of that traitor's fell designs, could go home and think no more about them! Nothing but the excitement which prevailed in the spring of 1807 could have blinded people to the palpable and gross irreconcilabilities of Eaton's testimony.

Commodore Truxton was the next witness. He testified that Colonel Burr had explained to him his designs upon Mexico, and his intention to settle the lands on the Washita, and had invited him to join; but he had declined. "I asked him," said the commodore, "if the executive were privy to or concerned in the project. He answered, *emphatically*, that he was NOT." The following is part of Commodore Truxton's testimony:

Truxton. — Colonel Burr said, that after the Mexican expedition, he intended to provide a formidable navy, at the head of which he intended to place me: that he intended to establish an independent government, and give liberty to an enslaved world. I declined his propositions to me at first, because the President was not privy to the project. He asked me the best mode of attacking the Havana, Carthagena, and La Vera Cruz; but spoke of no particular force.

Question by Colonel Burr. — Do you not recollect my telling you of the propriety of private expeditions, undertaken by individuals in case of war; and that there had been such in the late war, and that there is no legal restraint on such expeditions?

Mr. Hay objected to this question as improper.

Colonel Burr insisted on its propriety, and that the gentlemen for the prosecution had set an example far beyond it.

Commodore Truxton answered — You said that Wilkinson,

the army, and many of the officers of the navy would join, and you spoke highly of Lieutenant Jones.

Colonel Burr. — Were we not on terms of intimacy? Was there any reserve on my part, in our frequent conversations? and did you ever hear me express any intention or sentiment respecting a division of the Union?

Answer. — We were very intimate. There seemed to be no reserve on your part. I never heard you speak of a division of the Union.

Colonel Burr. — Did I not state to you that the Mexican expedition would be very beneficial to this country?

Answer. — You did.

Colonel Burr. — Had you any serious doubt as to my intention to settle those lands?

Answer. — So far from that, I was astonished at the intelligence of your having different views, contained in newspapers received from the western country, after you went thither.*

Peter Taylor, formerly a gardener on Blennerhassett Island, was next examined. The only part of his evidence which threw light on the case, was a conversation which had taken place between himself and Blennerhassett in October, 1806. About that time, said Taylor, Blennerhassett "began to inquire for young men that had rifles; good, orderly men, that

* It is right to add that Commodore Truxton's evidence is confirmed by General Adair, who was thoroughly possessed of Burr's real designs. Adair was not examined on the trial, but he wrote, in March, 1807, the following statement: "So far as I know or believe of the intentions of Colonel Burr (and my enemies will agree I am not ignorant on this subject), they were to prepare and lead an expedition into Mexico, predicated on a war between the two governments; without a war he knew he could do nothing. On this war taking place he calculated with certainty, as well from the policy of the measure at this time as from the positive assurances of Wilkinson, who seemed to have the power to force it in his own hands. This continued to be the object of Colonel Burr until he heard of the venal and shameful bargain made by Wilkinson at the Sabine river; this information he received soon after the attempt to arrest him in Frankfort. He then turned his attention altogether toward strengthening himself on the Washita, and waiting a more favorable crisis."

would be conformable to order and discipline. He allowed that Colonel Burr and he and a few of his friends, had bought eight hundred thousand acres of land, and they wanted young men to settle it. He said he would give any young man who would go down the river one hundred acres of land, plenty of grog and victuals while going down the river, and three months' provisions after they had got to the end; every young man must have his rifle and blanket. I agreed to go myself, if I could carry my wife and family, but he said he must have further consultation upon that. When I got home I began to think, and asked him, what kind of seed we should carry with us? He said we did not want any, the people had seeds where we were going. I urged that subject to him several times; at last he made a sudden pause, and said, 'I will tell you what, Peter, we are going to take Mexico; one of the finest and richest places in the whole world.' He said that Colonel Burr would be the king of Mexico, and Mrs. Alston, daughter of Colonel Burr, was to be the queen of Mexico, whenever Colonel Burr died. He said that Colonel Burr had made fortunes for many in his time, but none for himself; but now he was going to make something for himself. He said that he had a great many friends in the Spanish territory; no less than two thousand Roman Catholic priests were engaged, and that all their friends too would join, if once he could get to them; that the Spaniards, like the French, had got dissatisfied with their government, and wanted to *swap* it. He told me that the British also were friends in this piece of business, and that he should go to England, on this piece of business, for Colonel Burr. He asked me if I would not like to go to England. I said I should certainly like to see my friends there, but would wish to go for nothing else. I then asked him what was to become of the men who were going to settle the lands he talked about? Were they to stop at the Red River, or to go on? He said, 'O, by God, I tell you, Peter, every man that will not conform to order and discipline, I will stab; you'll see how I'll fix them;' that when he got them far enough down the river, if they did not conform to order and discipline, he swore by God he'd stab them. I was aston-

ished: I told him I was no soldier, and could not fight. He said it made no odds; he did not want *me* to fight; he wanted me to go and live with Mrs Blennerhassett and the children, either at Natchez, or some other place, while he went on the expedition. I talked to him again, and told him the people had got it into their heads that he wanted to divide the Union. He said Colonel Burr and he could not do it themselves. All they could do was to tell the people the consequence of it. He said the people there paid the government upward of four hundred thousand dollars a year, and never received any benefit from it. He allowed it would be a very fine thing if they could keep that money among themselves on this side the mountains, and make locks, and build bridges, and cut roads."

The witness further testified that he had never chanced to see Colonel Burr on the island, and that the preparations made there for the expedition were merely the drying of corn and the packing of provisions. There was no "warlike array."

The Morgans, father and two sons, were then examined. They testified as stated in the former chapter.

Jacob Allbright was next called, and led off thus: "The first I knew of this business was, I was hired on the island to help to build a kiln for drying corn; and after working some time, Mrs. Blennerhassett told me that Mr. Blennerhassett and Colonel Burr were going to lay in provisions for an army for a year. I went to the mill, where I carried the corn to be ground after it had been dried. I worked four weeks in that business on the island. Last fall (or in September), after Blennerhassett had come home (he had been promising me cash for some time), I stept up to him. He had no money at the time; but would pay me next day, or soon. Says he, 'Mr. Allbright, you are a Dutchman.' But he asked me first and foremost, whether I would not join with him and go down the river? I told him I did not know what they were upon; and he said, 'Mr. Allbright, we are going to settle a new country.' And I gave him an answer that I would not like to leave my family. He said he did not want any families to go along with him. Then he said to me, 'You are a

Dutchman, and a common man; and as the Dutch are apt to be scared by high men, if you'll go to New Lancaster, where the Dutch live, and get me twenty or thirty to go with us, I will give you as many dollars.' New Lancaster was some distance off. I went home then, and gave him no answer upon that. In a few days after the boats came and landed at the island. The snow was about two or three inches deep, and I went out a hunting. I was on the Ohio side; I met two men; I knew they belonged to the boats, but I wanted to find out; and they asked me whether I had not given my consent to go along with Blennerhassett down the river? As we got into a conversation together, they named themselves Colonel Burr's men, belonging to the boats, landed at the island. When they asked me whether I had not consented to go down with Blennerhassett, I put a question to them. I told them I did not know what they were about; and one of the gentlemen told me they were going to take a silver mine from the *Spanish*. I asked the gentlemen whether they would not allow that this would raise war with America? They replied, no. They were only a few men; and if they went with a good army, they would give up the country, and nothing more said about it. These men showed me what fine rifles they had going down the river with them."

The witness testified further that the men assembled on the island were armed with rifles and pistols, according to the custom of the country. There were no bayonets; no unusual store of powder or bullets; no military drill or organization.

Blennerhassett's groom gave similar testimony. The building of the boats and the purchase of provisions were proved by the persons concerned in those transactions. Dudley Woodbridge, partner and agent of Blennerhassett, testified, that that gentleman was worth, exclusive of his island and his five negroes, not more than seventeen thousand dollars; that he was totally unacquainted with military affairs; that he was so short-sighted as not to be able to distinguish a man from a horse at the distance of ten paces; and that the greater part of the expense incurred in buying the provisions and

building the boats, was paid, not by Blennerhasset, but by Burr.

The evidence of the alleged overt act here rested. It is not necessary to say that no overt act had been proved; nothing like an act of treason had been proved. The prosecution being now about to introduce evidence collateral and indirect, the counsel for the defense objected. Here they had resolved to take a position, and try all the resources of their talents, their learning, and their powers of endurance, in resisting the introduction of one word more of testimony, unless to prove the overt act. It was the 20th of August (and the seventeenth day of the trial) when the debate on this question began, and it lasted nine days. It was, doubtless, the finest display of legal knowledge and ability of which the history of the American bar can boast. The report of it fills a large volume. It all turns upon the simple question so often stated, whether, until the *fact* of a crime is proved, any thing may be heard respecting the guilty *intention* of the person accused. The counsel for the defense contended, first, that no overt act had been committed; and, secondly, that if an overt act had been committed, the evidence pointed to Blennerhassett as the principal, and to Burr only as a possible accessory.

Wickham, Martin, Hay, Randolph, Botts, MacRae, all won honor in this keen encounter; but as they confined themselves chiefly to the law of the question, and aimed solely to convince the clear-headed judge who was to decide it, their speeches are not interesting, nor always intelligible to the unprofessional reader. In the popular view, William Wirt was the hero of the occasion. One famous passage in one of his speeches in this debate, has obtained the last honors of American literature — it has got into the school-books, and is declaimed on exhibition days. Perhaps nothing ever written about Aaron Burr has done more to make and keep him odious than this piece of fluent, sounding rhetoric. Familiar as it is to many readers, whom it has aided to carry off the honors of the platform, it must be printed here once more; and printed entire.

"Having shown, I think," said Mr. Wirt, "on the ground of *law*, that the prisoner can not be considered as an accessory, let me press the inquiry, whether on the ground of *reason* he be a principal or an accessory; and remember that his project was to seize New Orleans, separate the Union, and erect an independent empire in the West, of which he was to be the chief. This was the destination of the plot, and the conclusion of the drama. Will any man say that Blennerhassett was the principal, and Burr but an accessory? Who will believe that Burr, the author and projector of the plot, who raised the forces, who enlisted the men, and who procured the funds for carrying it into execution, was made a cat's paw of? Will any man believe that Burr, who is a soldier, bold, ardent, restless, and aspiring, the great actor, whose brain conceived, and whose hand brought the plot into operation, that he should sink down into an accessory, and that Blennerhassett should be elevated into a principal? He would startle at once at the thought. Aaron Burr, the contriver of the whole conspiracy, to everybody concerned in it was as the sun to the planets which surround him. Did he not bind them in their respective orbits and give them their light, their heat, and their motion? Yet he is to be considered an accessory, and Blennerhassett is to be the principal!

"Let us put the case between Burr and Blennerhassett. Let us compare the two men and settle this question of precedence between them. It may save a good deal of troublesome ceremony hereafter.

"Who Aaron Burr is, we have seen in part already. I will add, that beginning his operations in New York, he associates with him men whose wealth is to supply the necessary funds. Possessed of the main spring, his personal labor contrives all the machinery. Pervading the continent from New York to New Orleans, he draws into his plan, by every allurement which he can contrive, men of all ranks and descriptions. To youthful ardor he presents danger and glory; to ambition, rank, and titles, and honors; to avarice, the mines of Mexico. To each person whom he addresses he presents the object adapted to his taste. His recruiting officers are appointed.

Men are engaged throughout the continent. Civil life is indeed quiet upon its surface, but in its bosom this man has contrived to deposit the materials which, with the slightest touch of his match, produce an explosion to shake the continent. All this his restless ambition has contrived; and in the autumn of 1806 he goes forth for the last time to apply this match. On this occasion he meets with Blennerhassett.

"Who is Blennerhassett? A native of Ireland, a man of letters, who fled from the storms of his own country to find quiet in ours. His history shows that war is not the natural element of his mind. If it had been, he never would have exchanged Ireland for America. So far is an army from furnishing the society natural and proper to Mr. Blennerhassett's character, that on his arrival in America, he retired even from the population of the Atlantic States, and sought quiet and solitude in the bosom of our western forests. But he carried with him taste, and science, and wealth; and lo, the desert smiled! Possessing himself of a beautiful island in the Ohio, he rears upon it a palace and decorates it with every romantic embellishment of fancy. A shrubbery, that Shenstone might have envied, blooms around him. Music, that might have charmed Calypso and her nymphs, is his. An extensive library spreads its treasures before him. A philosophical apparatus offers to him all the secrets and mysteries of nature. Peace, tranquillity, and innocence shed their mingled delights around him. And to crown the enchantment of the scene, a wife, who is said to be lovely even beyond her sex, and graced with every accomplishment that can render it irresistible, had blessed him with her love and made him the father of several children. The evidence would convince you that this is but a faint picture of the real life. In the midst of all this peace, this innocent simplicity and this tranquillity, this feast of the mind, this pure banquet of the heart, the destroyer comes; he comes to change this paradise into a hell. Yet the flowers do not wither at his approach. No monitory shuddering through the bosom of their unfortunate possessor warns him of the ruin that is coming upon him. A stranger presents himself. Introduced to their civilities by the high rank which he had lately held in his

country, he soon finds his way to their hearts, by the dignity and elegance of his demeanor, the light and beauty of his conversation, and the seductive and fascinating power of his address. The conquest was not difficult. Innocence is ever simple and credulous. Conscious of no design itself, it suspects none in others. It wears no guard before its breast. Every door and portal and avenue of the heart is thrown open, and all who choose it enter. Such was the state of Eden when the serpent entered its bowers. The prisoner, in a more engaging form, winding himself into the open and unpracticed heart of the unfortunate Blennerhassett, found but little difficulty in changing the native character of that heart and the objects of its affection. By degrees he infuses into it the poison of his own ambition. He breathes into it the fire of his own courage; a daring and desperate thirst for glory; an ardor panting for great enterprises, for all the storm, and bustle, and hurricane of life. In a short time the whole man is changed, and every object of his former delight is relinquished. No more he enjoys the tranquil scene: it has become flat and insipid to his taste. His books are abandoned. His retort and crucible are thrown aside. His shrubbery blooms and breathes its fragrance upon the air in vain: he likes it not. His ear no longer drinks the rich melody of music; it longs for the trumpet's clangor and the cannon's roar. Even the prattle of his babes, once so sweet, no longer affects him; and the angel smile of his wife, which hitherto touched his bosom with ecstacy so unspeakable, is now unseen and unfelt. Greater objects have taken possession of his soul. His imagination has been dazzled by visions of diadems, of stars and garters, and titles of nobility. He has been taught to burn with restless emulation at the names of great heroes and conquerors. His enchanted island is destined soon to relapse into a wilderness; and in a few months we find the beautiful and tender partner of his bosom whom he lately 'permitted not the winds of' summer 'to visit too roughly,' we find her shivering at midnight, on the winter banks of the Ohio, and mingling her tears with the torrents, that froze as they fell. Yet this unfortunate man, thus deluded from his interest and his happiness, thus seduced

from the paths of innocence and peace, thus confounded in the toils that were deliberately spread for him and overwhelmed by the mastering spirit and genius of another — this man, thus ruined and undone, and made to play a subordinate part in this grand drama of guilt and treason — this man is to be called the principal offender, while *he*, by whom he was thus plunged in misery, is comparatively innocent, a mere accessory! Is this reason? Is it law? Is it humanity? Sir, neither the human heart nor the human understanding will bear a perversion so monstrous and absurd! so shocking to the soul! so revolting to reason! Let Aaron Burr then not shrink from the high destination which he has courted, and having already ruined Blennerhassett in fortune, character, and happiness for ever, let him not attempt to finish the tragedy by thrusting that ill-fated man between himself and punishment.

"Upon the whole, sir, reason declares Aaron Burr the principal in this crime, and confirms herein the sentence of the law; and the gentleman, in saying that his offense is of a derivative and accessorial nature, begs the question and draws his conclusions from what, instead of being conceded, is denied. It is clear from what has been said, that Burr did not derive his guilt from the men on the island, but imparted his own guilt to them; that he is not an accessory, but a principal; and therefore, that there is nothing in the objection which demands a record of their conviction before we shall go on with our proof against him."

In curious contrast with this oration is a passage in a letter from Mrs. Blennerhassett to her husband, written on the 3d of August, which he received during the debate of which Mr. Wirt's brilliant fiction was a part. He might, indeed, have been reading it at the very moment that Wirt was in the full flow of his oratorical romance. "Apprise Colonel Burr," she wrote, "of my warmest acknowledgments, for his own and Mrs. Alston's kind remembrance; and tell him to assure her she has inspired me with a warmth of attachment which never can diminish. I wish him to urge her to write to me."

In contrast only less striking is the diary of Mr. Blennerhassett, which he kept during the trial, while he was in con-

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Chadron, Nebraska

finement. When Blennerhassett wrote the passages about to be quoted, he was already in dispute with Burr and with Alston respecting the proper apportionment of their common pecuniary loss. Yet he could write of him in terms like these:

"The vivacity of Burr's wit, and the exercise of his proper talents, now constantly solicited here, (at Richmond) in private and public exhibition, while they display his powers and address at the levee and the bar, must engross more of his time than he can spare from the demands of other gratifications; while they display him to the eager eyes of the multitude, like a favorite gladiator, measuring over the arena of his fame with firm step and manly grace, the pledges of easy victory."

* * * * * * * *

"I visited Burr this morning. He is as gay as usual, and as busy in speculations on reorganizing his projects for action as if he had never suffered the least interruption. He observed to Major Smith and me, that in six months our schemes could be all remounted; that we could now new model them in a better mold than formerly, having a better view of the ground, and a more perfect knowledge of our men. We were silent. It should yet be granted, that if Burr possessed sensibility of the right sort, with one hundredth part of the energies for which, with many, he has obtained such ill-grounded credit, his first and last determination, with the morning and the night, should be the destruction of those enemies who have so long and cruelly wreaked their malicious vengeance on him."

* * * * * *

"I was glad to find Burr had at last thought of asking us to dine with him, as I was rather curious again to see him shine in a *partie quarrie*, consisting of new characters. We therefore walked with him from court; Luther Martin, who lives with him, accompanying us. The dinner was neat, and followed by three or four sorts of wine. Splendid poverty! During the chit-chat, after the cloth was removed, a letter was handed to Burr, next to whom I sat. I immediately smelt musk. Burr broke the seal, put the cover to his nose,

and then handed it to me, saying — 'This amounts to a disclosure.' I smelled the paper, and said, 'I think so.' The whole physiognomy of the man now assumed an alteration and vivacity that, to a stranger who had never seen him before, would have sunk full fifteen years of his age. 'This,' said he, 'reminds me of a detection very neatly practiced upon me in New York.' (He then related the story of the musk-scented note, given in a former chapter.)

* * * * * *

"After some time Martin and Prevost withdrew, and we passed to the topics of our late adventures on the Mississippi, in which Burr said little, but declared he did not know of any reason to blame General Jackson, of Tennessee, for any thing he had done or omitted. But he declares he will not lose a day after the favorable issue at the capitol (his acquittal), of which he has no doubt, to direct his entire attention to setting up his projects (which have only been suspended) on a better model, 'in which work,' he says, 'he has even here made some progress.'"

* * * * * *

"I have seen a complete file of all the depositions, made before the grand jury, in Burr's possession. It must be confessed that few other men, in his circumstances, could have procured these documents out of the custody of offices filled by his inveterate enemies. Burr asserted, to-day, in court, that he expected documents that would disqualify Eaton as a witness."

* * * * * *

"As we were chatting, after dinner, in staggered the whole rear-guard of Burr's forensic army — I mean, the celebrated Luther Martin, who yesterday concluded his fourteen hours' speech. His visit was to Major Smith, but he took me by the hand, saying there was no need of an introduction. I was too much interested by the little I had seen, and the great things I had heard, of this man's powers and passions, not to improve the present opportunity to survey him in every light the length of his visit would permit. I accordingly recommended our brandy as superior, placing a pint-tumbler before

him. No ceremonies retarded the libation; no inquiries solicited him upon any subject, till apprehensions of his withdrawing suggested some topic to quiet him on his seat. Were I now to mention only the subjects of law, politics, news, et cetera, on which he descanted, I should not be believed, when I said his visit did not exceed thirty-five minutes. Imagine a man capable, in that space of time, to deliver some account of an entire week's proceedings in the trial, with extracts from memory of several speeches on both sides, including long ones from his own; to recite half columns *verbatim* of a series of papers, of which he said he is the author; to caricature Jefferson; to give a history of his acquaintance with Burr; expatiate on his *virtues* and sufferings, maintain his credit, embellish his fame, and intersperse the whole with sententious reprobations and praises of several other characters; some estimate, with these preparations, may be formed of this man's powers, which are yet shackled by a preternatural secretion or excretion of saliva which embarrasses his delivery. In this, his manner is rude, and his language ungrammatical; which is cruelly aggravated upon his hearers, by the verbosity and repetition of his style. With the warmest passions, that hurry him, like a torrent, over those characters or topics that lie most in the way of their course, he has, by practice, acquired the faculty of curbing his feelings, which he never suffers to charge the enemy till broken by the superior numbers of his arguments and authorities, by which he always out-flanks him, when he lets loose the reserve upon the center, with redoubled impetuosity. Yet fancy has been denied to his mind, or grace to his person or habits. These are gross, and incapable of restraint, even upon the most solemn public occasions. This is, at all times, awkward and disgusting. Hence, his invectives are rather coarse than pointed; his eulogiums more fulsome than pathetic. In short, every trait of his portrait may be given in one word — he is '*the Thersites of the law.*' "

* * * * * *

"Wirt spoke very much to engage the fancy of his hearers, to-day, without affecting their understanding. For he can

not reason upon the facts before him, and can no more conduct a law argument than I could raise a temple; as Junius says of the king: 'The feather that adorns him supports his flight; strip him of his plumage, and you fix him to earth!'"

* * * * *

"I called on Burr this morning, when he at last mentioned to me, during a short tête-à-tête, that he was preparing to go to England; that the time was now auspicious for him, and he wished to know whether I could give him letters. I answered that I supposed, when he mentioned England, he meant London, as his business would probably be with people in office; that I knew none of the present ministry, nor did I believe I had a single acquaintance in London. He replied that he meant to visit every part of the country, and would be glad to get letters to any one. I said I would think of it, that I might discover whether I had any friends there whom it would be an object worth his attention to know, and took leave. We can only conjecture his designs. For my part, I am disposed to suspect that he has no serious intent of reviving any of his speculations in America, or even of returning from Europe if he can get there."

Thus Blennerhassett.

It may as well be further stated, that Blennerhassett was *not* ruined through his connection with Burr, but by his own indolence and folly, aided by Jefferson's embargo, and the war of 1812. After the trial was over he went home to find his shrubbery that Shenstone might have envied, etc., laid waste by the Vandals of the Ohio river, who had taken advantage of the master's absence to gratify their abhorrence of elegance and taste. He removed afterward to Mississippi, where he bought a cotton plantation of a thousand acres, which his wife managed, and for a while made profitable. But the continuance of the embargo, and the war which followed it, depressed the cotton interest, and completed the ruin of the Blennerhassetts.

If Blennerhassett had never seen Aaron Burr, he must have run through his fortune in a few years — for he was living far beyond his income, and was singularly destitute of the ability to add to his capital. Moreover, he probably lost less in pro-

portion to his means than any other of Burr's leading confederates.

The passage from Mr. Wirt's speech, which is quoted above, always appealed strongly to Burr's sense of the ridiculous. It was a standing joke with him for the rest of his life. He laughed over the recollection of it a thousand times. In the company of familiar friends, he would repeat the most exaggerated parts of the speech, and then narrate, with a kind of humorous exactness, the actual facts of his connection with Blennerhassett, which were as different from Wirt's version of them as fact ever is from romantic fiction.

But to return to the court-room.

On Saturday evening, August 29th, the great debate was concluded in an impressive speech by Mr. Randolph. The court adjourned. On Monday morning, the Chief Justice was ready with his decision, which every one felt would decide the case, as well as the motion to exclude further testimony. An overt act had certainly not been shown; and if the prosecution were debarred from adding testimony showing criminal intention, the case must go at once to the jury, who could not hesitate a moment to acquit the prisoner. The breathless interest with which the bar, the prisoner, and the auditors, listened to the great judge's clear and cogent reasoning, may be imagined.

"The question now to be decided," he began, "has been argued in a manner worthy of its importance, and with an earnestness evincing the strong conviction felt by the counsel on each side that the law is with them. A degree of eloquence seldom displayed on any occasion, has embellished a solidity of argument and a depth of research, by which the court has been greatly aided in forming the opinion it is about to deliver." With this brief introduction, he proceeded at once to grapple with the subject, and discussed it in so masterly a manner, that one ignorant of law may read the decision still with interest and pleasure, merely as an essay on the nature and evidence of treason. The reading lasted nearly three hours. As he was about to close, the Chief Justice alluded to the remarks which had fallen from all the coun

sel at different times, respecting the *political* considerations which might sway the mind of a judge in deciding a case like that then before the court. He made this allusion with excellent taste and judgment. The reader will peruse with admiration the closing paragraphs of this celebrated decision.

"Much has been said in the course of the argument on points on which the court feels no inclination to comment particularly; but which may, perhaps, not improperly receive some notice.

"That this court dares not usurp power is most true. That this court dares not shrink from its duty is not less true. No man is desirous of placing himself in a disagreeable situation. No man is desirous of becoming the peculiar subject of calumny. No man, might he let the bitter cup pass from him without self-reproach, would drain it to the bottom. But if he have no choice in the case, if there be no alternative presented to him but a dereliction of duty or the opprobrium of those who are denominated the world, he merits the contempt as well as the indignation of his country who can hesitate which to embrace

"That gentlemen, in a case the most interesting, in the zeal with which they advocate particular opinions, and under the conviction in some measure produced by that zeal, should on each side press their arguments too far, should be impatient at any deliberation in the court, and should suspect or fear the operation of motives to which alone they can ascribe that deliberation, is perhaps a frailty incident to human nature; but if any conduct on the part of the court could warrant a sentiment that it would deviate to the one side or the other from the line prescribed by duty and by law, that conduct would be viewed by the judges themselves with an eye of extreme severity, and would long be recollected with deep and serious regret.

"The arguments on both sides have been intently and deliberately considered. Those which could not be noticed, since to notice every argument and authority would swell this opinion to a volume, have not been disregarded. The result of the whole is a conviction, as complete as the mind of the

court is capable of receiving on a complex subject, that the motion must prevail.

"No testimony relative to the conduct or declarations of the prisoner elsewhere and subsequent to the transaction on Blennerhassett's Island can be admitted; because such testimony, being in its nature merely corroborative, and incompetent to prove the overt act in itself, is irrelevant until there be proof of the overt act by two witnesses.

"This opinion does not comprehend the proof by two witnesses that the meeting on Blennerhassett's Island was procured by the prisoner. On that point the court for the present withholds its opinion for reasons which have been already assigned; and as it is understood from the statements made on the part of the prosecution that no such testimony exists. If there be such, let it be offered; and the court will decide upon it.

"The jury have now heard the opinion of the court on the law of the case. They will apply that law to the facts, and will find a verdict of guilty or not guilty as their own consciences may direct."

When the judge ceased, and the irrepressible buzz of excitement which arose in the court-room had subsided, Mr. Hay requested time for himself and his associates to reflect upon the decision. No one objecting, the court adjourned until the next morning, when Mr. Hay intimated his willingness to let the case go to the jury without further remark. The jury retired. In a few minutes, they returned with the following irregular verdict, which was read by the foreman:

"We, of the jury, say that Aaron Burr is not proved to be guilty under the indictment by any evidence submitted to us. We, therefore, find him not guilty."

Colonel Burr rose and, in a manner more like vehemence than he had before exhibited, protested against the form of the verdict, and demanded that it be rendered in the usual terms. An animated conversation arose, in which prisoner, judge, counsel, and jury, all took part; and, at length, as some of the jury would not consent to an alteration, the matter was

compromised by accepting the verdict as rendered, but entering it on the record, simply, "not guilty."

A messenger bore the news of the acquittal to Theodosia. While her father was insisting upon his right to a more ample vindication at the hands of the jury, she was writing the intelligence to a dear friend, the wife of one of her mother's sons, in whose family archives it is still preserved. I am permitted to copy the part of it which relates to Colonel Burr:

"I have this moment received a message from court announcing to me that the jury has brought in a verdict of acquittal, and I hasten to inform you of it, my dear, to allay the anxiety which, with even more than your usual sweetness, you have expressed in your letter of the 22d of July. It afflicts me, indeed, to think that you should have suffered so much from sympathy with the imagined state of my feelings — for the knowledge of my father's innocence, my ineffable contempt for his enemies, and the elevation of his mind, have kept me above any sensations bordering on depression. Indeed, my father, so far from accepting of sympathy, has continually animated all around him; it was common to see his desponding friends filled with alarm at some new occurrence, terrified with some new appearance of danger, fly to him in search of encouragement and support, and laughed out of their fears by the subject of them. This I have witnessed every day, and it almost persuaded me that he possessed the secret of repelling danger as well as apprehension. Since my residence here, of which some days and a night were passed in the penitentiary, our little family circle has been a scene of uninterrupted gayety. Thus you see, my lovely sister, this visit has been a real party of pleasure. From many of the first inhabitants I have received the most unremitting and delicate attentions, sympathy, indeed, of any I ever experienced."

The news was received by Mr. Jefferson with very different feelings. He wrote immediately to Mr. Hay, telling him to let no witness depart without taking a copy of his evidence, which, said he, is "*now more important than ever!*" thus intimating, that the real object of the prosecution was not so

much to convict Aaron Burr of treason, as to acquit Thomas Jefferson of precipitate and ridiculous credulity. "The criminal," continued the President, "is preserved to become the rallying-point of all the disaffected and worthless of the United States, and to be the pivot on which all the intrigues and conspiracies which foreign governments may wish to disturb us with, are to turn. If he is convicted of the misdemeanor, the judge must in decency give us respite by some short confinement of him; but we must expect it to be very short. Be assured yourself, and communicate the same assurance to your colleagues, that your and their zeal and abilities have been displayed in this affair to my entire satisfaction and your own honor."

But the prisoner was not convicted of "the misdemeanor." The day after being acquitted of treason he was released from prison on bail, and the proceedings on the charge of misdemeanor began. Colonel Burr and his counsel contended, in a debate of many hours, that a man can not lawfully be tried twice for the same offense; and that the verdict of the jury entitled him to a complete discharge. It was decided otherwise, however, and the new trial lingered day after day, week after week, with reams of argument upon every point, until the last week in October. Wilkinson was examined, and told his story. Much has been made by the friends of Burr of Wilkinson's admission that he made certain slight alterations in the cipher-letter, and then swore that his version of it was a true deciphering of the original. The admission may condemn Wilkinson, but does not exonerate Burr, because the alterations do not affect the general drift of the letter — do not affect the fact that Aaron Burr, who plumed himself upon his soldierly honor, tried to induce a soldier to adopt a course of proceeding which was contrary to the known policy of the government, whose commission he held, and whose uniform he wore. Not hastily would I condemn a man whose errors were expiated as no man's ever were expiated before, and upon whom the craven rhetoricians have delighted to heap opprobrious epithets. But so much must be admitted: As long as the cipher-letter, as deciphered by the grand jury, exists unex-

plained, so long must Aaron Burr be denied a place in the catalogue of those who have attempted great enterprises by honorable means alone.

He was acquitted of the charge of misdemeanor, on the ground that the offense was not committed in Virginia, but in Ohio. Burr communicated the result to his daughter, who had returned to South Carolina, in these words: "After all, this is a sort of drawn battle. The Chief Justice gave his opinion on Tuesday. After declaring that there were no grounds of suspicion as to the treason, he directed that Burr and Blennerhassett should give bail in three thousand dollars for further trial in Ohio. This opinion was a matter of regret and surprise to the friends of the Chief Justice, and of ridicule to his enemies — all believing that it was a sacrifice of principle to conciliate *Jack Cade*. Mr. Hay immediately said that he should advise the government to *desist from further prosecution*. That he has actually so advised, there is no doubt."

Thus, eight months after his arrest in Alabama, and six months after the commencement of his trial at Richmond, he was free once more. The trial had not restored his good name. The ardent Jeffersonians, and all who had any thing to hope from the favor of the administration, denounced him without mercy or moderation — the papers in the interest of the government, of course, leading the cry. If the Federalists seemed to give him a faint support, it was only because to defend Burr was to disgust Jefferson. He was a ruined man. There was no resource left for him in his own country, even if there was a place in it where his person would be safe.

Late in the autumn, he went to Baltimore, where he was entertained in princely style by Luther Martin. Mr. Barney tells an anecdote or two respecting his stay in Baltimore. One day, while he was dining with a large company at Luther Martin's house, a military company, with a band playing a lively air, passed the house. It was supposed that the company intended to compliment Colonel Burr, who, accordingly rose from the table, threw open the window, and gracefully bowed to them.

"Why, colonel," exclaimed a humorous fellow in the room, "they are playing the Rogue's March, with charged bayonets!"

The windows were quickly closed, the company returned to their wine, and voted the captain of the company to be a very officious individual. "The next day," continues Barney, "strolling down Market-street, arm in arm with my persecuted friend, Mr. Hughes overtook us. 'Colonel,' said he, 'pass Light-street without looking down — Fountain Inn is surrounded by groups of your admiring friends. Captain Fraily is out of uniform to-day, but there is a general desire manifested to give you a warm reception in citizens' clothes. You must take your departure without further civil or military honors being conferred upon you.' With his accustomed celerity of action and excellent judgment, the colonel called a hack and jumped into it.

"'Colonel, my friend Barney will accompany you. You will have a pleasant drive out to Herron's Run. I will secure a seat in the stage coach, take charge of your baggage, swop you for my friend Barney, bring him home, and send you on your way to rejoice escaping being hustled by a Baltimore mob.'

"Colonel Burr intimated that he was too old a soldier to run away, in that manner, from a lawless mob. 'That is all fine bravado,' said Hughes; 'Barney and I have no desire to shoot down, or be shot by our fellow-citizens. You may throw your life away, colonel, but this bright world has too many attractions for us to throw away ours in defending you, when a pleasant ride of half an hour will save you from danger, and restore us to our affectionate parents.'"

He yielded, and was seen no more in Baltimore.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE EXILE.

HIS RESIDENCE IN ENGLAND.

Sails for England — Parting with Theodosia — Interviews with Canning, Castlereagh, and Mulgrave — Threatened with Expulsion from England — Claims to be a British Subject — His Success in Society — Charles Lamb — Bentham — Anecdotes of Burr and Bentham — His Occupations in London — Plans for Retrieving his Fortunes — Samuel Swartwout's Scheme — Burr's Tour in the North — A Month in Edinburg — Threatened with Arrest.

At that time, as now, British mail-packets sailed from New York and called at Halifax on their way to England. The *Clarissa* was the packet for June, 1808. Among the twenty-six passengers who overcrowded the cabin of the *Clarissa* on that voyage, was a silent, reading, gentlemanlike person, who appeared in the passenger list as *G. H. Edwards.* He occupied a third part of a small state-room, and paid sixty guineas for his passage. There was no Mr. Edwards on board when the ship left her wharf at New York, but as she lay at anchor one evening in the lower bay waiting for a fair wind, a pilot-boat swept round her bows, and lay to while a skiff conveyed another passenger to her side. It was known to no one but the captain that this passenger, announced as the expected Mr. Edwards, was Aaron Burr.

For a month previous he had been concealed in New York, or its vicinity, at the houses of his friends. His movements during that period were shrouded in mystery. His conduct was that of a man fearing arrest for a capital offense, rather than that of one who had just been acquitted. Theodosia was in the city. Letters passed between the father and daughter daily, in which plans for meeting were discussed with the caution of conspirators. He wrote every note apparently in fear that it would be intercepted. "If we should not meet to-day,"

he tells her on one occasion, "I shall write something in which I shall speak of you in the third person, under the name of Anne."

During this hurried and anxious month he is still his daughter's tutor and thoughtful adviser. He gently reproves her for not acknowledging the receipt of each article of his last enclosure, and says he thought she was long ago cured of that negligent way of answering a letter. He praises the fortitude with which she supports the agony of the coming separation. He commends her epistolary style. "There is," he says, "a selection, an energy, and aptitude in your expressions, which, to use the vulgar male slang, *is not feminine*." He tells her, that while he is in Europe he may put her in correspondence with literary characters, and cautions her against taking the tone of one who feels herself flattered by such a correspondence. Of all animals, he says, authors are the vainest; no eulogies of their works can be too gross, or too often repeated. Yet he advises her to be discriminate in her praise, selecting the real merits of a work for remark, which will both prove her discernment and save her sincerity. All such letters, he adds, will be sure at some time or other to get into print. He tenderly prepared her for the last interview, which he feared would be more than she could bear. One whole night, he assures her, they shall be together before the final separation. "Make haste," he said, "to gather strength for the occasion; your efforts on the late interview were wonderful, and God grant they may not have exhausted you!" The dreaded evening arrived. The last words of love, and grief, and hope were spoken; the father tore himself from his daughter's arms, and stole away to the boat that was in waiting to convey him down the harbor to the Long Island shore.

Burr used every precaution to conceal his departure. He left with Mrs. Alston the outline of a paragraph to be set afloat in the papers after the ship had sailed, to the effect that on a certain day Colonel Burr, with one Frenchman and two Americans, had passed through a designated place on his way to Canada. He left the city on the 1st of June, but the ship did not sail till the 9th. Those days of waiting he passed on

the shores of the harbor, crossing occasionally from Long Island to Staten Island, and visiting such friends in the neighborhood as were in his secret. Like a criminal, he fled from the country which had once delighted to honor him — from the city in whose counsels his voice had been potential, and of whose society he had been esteemed an ornament.

At Halifax he received letters of introduction from Sir George Prevost to his family and friends in England; also, a passport certifying that "G. H. Edwards was bearer of dispatches to the Right Honorable Lord Castlereagh, at whose office he was immediately to present himself on his arrival in London." Thirty-five days after leaving New York, the packet anchored in the harbor of Falmouth, and on the 16th of July, 1808, Colonel Burr was in London. On his arrival, he was at once domesticated in the family of the Prevosts, the relatives of his late wife, and of Theodosia.

On the very day which brought Colonel Burr within sight of the cliffs of Albion, Joseph Bonaparte entered Madrid as King of Spain. This was the first public news of importance that reached London after Burr's arrival. He must have heard the intelligence with dismay, for a man so acute as he must have discerned that such an event was death, or long postponement, to his dearest hopes.

He came to Europe with the design of laying before the cabinet of England, or the Emperor of France, his plans for the independence of Mexico, and of procuring, at least, the *authorization* of one of them for carrying out his schemes of personal aggrandizement and elevation in that country. But Joseph Bonaparte's assumption of the Spanish throne was precisely the event, of all others conceivable, to absolutely close the ears of *both* governments to such an application. England, before on ill terms with Spain, promptly took the part of the dethroned king, and sent the flower of her armies to the Peninsular war. England was publicly and irrevocably committed to the cause of the exiled monarch, and, of course, to the integrity of his dominions. To ask Napoleon's consent to the independence of Mexico would have seemed something like soliciting his consent to the partition of the

French empire. Mexico was part of the kingdom which he ruled through his brother Joseph. Mexico was *his*. If he had been disposed to give it away, an adventurer from far off America would not have been the selected recipient. A multitude of political combinations can be imagined which would have rendered one or the other of the hostile governments an eager listener to the bland and able representations of Aaron Burr. Unfortunately for him, perhaps unfortunately for Mexico, affairs took the turn which excluded his proposals even from consideration.

But Burr was not a man to yield without an effort. He proceeded immediately to business. He had interviews with Mr. Canning, Lord Castlereagh, Lord Mulgrave, and many other official persons, to whom his plans were made known. He received not the slightest encouragement. One of his first letters to his daughter announced, that "Mexico had been abandoned." "This certainly was inevitable," replied the fond Theodosia; "but I can not part with what has so long lain near my heart, and not feel some regret, some sorrow. No doubt there are many other roads to happiness, but this appeared so perfectly suitable to you, so complete a remuneration for all the past, it so entirely coincided with my wishes relative to you, that I cherished it as my comfort, even when illness scarcely allowed me any hope of witnessing its completion. My knowledge of your character, however, consoles me greatly. You will not remain idle. The situation in which you are placed would excite apathy itself, and your mind needs no external impulse."

It was not even certain that the adventurer would be permitted to reside in England. After a few weeks of active exertion in London, he received one day, as he was leaving for the country, a very pointed *request* from Lord Hawkesbury, one of the Secretaries of State, that he should present himself forthwith at the Home Office. He went. What transpired is not precisely known. But his right to live in England was so seriously called in question, that he was driven to demand it on the ground that he was born, and still remained, *a British subject*. Lord Hawkesbury pronounced the claim monstrous.

But Burr was the better lawyer of the two, and knew well the peculiarities of British laws respecting citizenship. The question puzzled the whole cabinet, was referred to the law officers of the crown, and was some months in arriving at settlement. Meanwhile, the claimant lived and wandered in England at his pleasure. Such a claim, from a man who had been for four years in arms against the King of England, and who had filled the second office in that victorious republic, whose creation dismembered the British empire, was an amusing instance of Burr's lawyerly audacity.*

Colonel Burr, then, was not a historical person in Europe, the great events of the time submerging his public schemes. Yet I think it worth while to narrate with some minuteness his personal adventures in the old world, because many of them were highly curious and characteristic, and the narrative affords an occasional glimpse of the most stirring time this century has known.

Europe was in arms. Every human interest was subordinate to the gigantic Napoleonic wars. Napoleon was near the pinnacle of his greatness. During this very autumn, Burr's first season in Europe, the French emperor was the central figure of that dazzling congress of Erfurth, where he and the Czar Alexander met on the raft in the middle of the river, and vowed eternal friendship, two armies looking on. Baffled England was still resolute to hurl the parvenu down. Before the year closed, Napoleon was in Spain, driving before him Sir John Moore and the English army, in that terrible retreat which Wolfe's song has made familiar to posterity; and England had diplomatized a new coalition against the conqueror which summoned him from victory in the Peninsula to

* The most absurd reports of his designs in England reached America. Jefferson wrote, October 17th, 1808: "Burr is in London, and is giving out to his friends that that government offers him two millions of dollars the moment he can raise an ensign of rebellion as big as a handkerchief. Some of his partisans will believe this, because they wish it. But those who know him best will not believe it the more because he says it. For myself, even in his most flattering periods of the conspiracy, I never entertained one moment's fear."

victory more splendid on the Danube; to victory which placed the Austrian empire at his mercy, and gave him the fatal hand of Marie Louise. The breach between England and the United States was widening, and the war of 1812 was casting its baleful shadow before. The British attack on the American frigate *Chesapeake*, and the consequent embargo, were recent events. The passage by Congress of the non-intercourse act was only one year distant. Communication with every part of the world was difficult, and traveling on the continent of Europe was obstructed, where it was not impossible. During the years of Colonel Burr's residence in Europe, no essential change occurred in the politics or the position of the great powers. The world was filled with the noise of war.

Burr's success in the society of the British metropolis may be called brilliant. The men best worth knowing were among his intimate friends; and in the most exclusive circles he was a frequent and welcome guest. His fame had gone before him. He was sometimes introduced as "the celebrated Colonel Burr." His "affair with Hamilton" was well known in London, as were also his recent high rank in the United States, his downfall, and his trial for treason. With many of the higher officers of the government we find him intimate during the whole period of his stay in Europe. He had the *entrée* of Holland House, then the center of a brilliant opposition, and the resort of wit and genius. He was intimate with the Earl of Bridgewater, son of the earl famous for his devotion to the canal system. Godwin was his frequent associate, to whom he owed an acquaintance with Charles Lamb. There is this too brief narration of Lamb in Burr's Diary: "Agreed with Madame Godwin for rendezvous at Mr. Lamb's rooms. He is a writer, and lives with a maiden sister, also literaire, in a fourth story." Lamb was then but in his thirty-third year, and known only to a literary coterie. Faseli, the painter, was another of Burr's acquaintances in London. With the higher powers he had influence enough, during his first three months in England, to procure a midshipman's warrant for the son of a lady whom he wished to oblige. The reader will, indeed, observe that into whatever city or country Colonel Burr went,

he took his place at once in its highest circle, and associated chiefly with the people most truly eminent. This was the case, too, when his lodgings were not nameable to West-End ears, when he lived upon potatoes, and was hungry because his stock was gone, and his exchequer, reduced to two half pence, could not afford a replenishment.

Jeremy Bentham was Burr's dearest friend in England, though it was only by accident that he became acquainted with him. Bentham was a man of fortune who devoted the leisure that wealth confers to pursuits which dignify, if they do not justify, the possession of independent wealth. *The greatest happiness of the greatest number* was a phrase which his youthful eye had caught from "the tail of one of Priestley's pamphlets," and his life was spent in writing treatises which applied that principle to the laws and institutions of States.* The philosopher was now more than sixty years old, but (so slow is the growth of a lasting fame), his works were known only to the thoughtful few. Burr used to say that no one in the United States appreciated Jeremy Bentham's ideas except himself and Albert Gallatin. To Theodosia, in happier days, he had been accustomed to speak of Bentham as "second to no man, ancient or modern, in profound thinking, in logical and analytic reasoning." The fortunate accident which brought him into personal relations with his favorite author is related by M. Dumont, who translated Bentham's works into French.

"I have met," wrote Dumont to Bentham, "with a person in London enjoying a celebrity which is somewhat embarass-

* "Bentham himself, and even the creed of Bentham, seems to me comparatively worthy of praise. It is a determinate *being* what all the world, in a cowardly, hâlf-and-half manner, was tending to be. Let us have the crisis; we shall have either death or the cure. I call this gross steam-engine utilitarianism an approach toward new faith. It is a laying down of cant; a saying to one's self, 'Well, then, this world is a dead iron machine, the god of it Gravitation and selfish Hunger; let us see what, by checking and balancing, and good adjustment of tooth and pinion, can be made of it.' Benthamism has something complete, manful, in such fearless committal of itself to what it finds true; you may call it Heroic, though a Heroism with its *eyes* put out."—CARLYLE: *Heroes and Hero Worship.*

ing to him, and from which he has retreated into a capital two thousand leagues from his home. This is Mr. Edwards in London; in America, it was Mr. Burr. We met at dinner — acquaintance was soon established between us; and as soon as he heard me named, he inquired with an air of surprise and of satisfaction, if I were the person to whom he was indebted for his acquaintance with the writings of Bentham. He had read 'Principles,' and 'Usury,' and as soon as he saw the announcement at Paris, had sent for sundry copies. He spoke of them with the strongest admiration — said they were the only works on legislation where there was philosophical method; that, compared to these, Montesquieu's writings were trifling, etc. He added that, in spite of his recommendations, they were little read in America, where any thing requiring studious application is neglected. Nobody but Gallatin had felt all their merit, and Gallatin was the best head in the United States. Mr. Burr was anxiously desirous of knowing the author — of passing a day with him; this, said he, would be a satisfaction for the rest of his life. He passes all the autumn in England, but does not know how long beyond. If you are disposed to receive him, whether in town or country, let me give him the happy news, and I think you will not be sorry you have seen him. You may tell me, his duel with Hamilton was a savage affair; but he has no desire whatever to break your head."

Bentham, who was extremely susceptible to appreciation, made the desired response. Colonel Burr was invited to Barrow Green, near London, where the sage was then staying, and "great," says Bentham's biographer, "was his joy on receiving the invitation." Bentham ordered a horse to be sent to London to convey him to the country, but Burr had provided a horse of his own.

In Bentham's own reminiscences, we find only brief allusion to his intimacy with Burr. "I was brought acquainted," he says, "with Colonel Aaron Burr thus: he had given a general order to a bookseller to forward whatever books I should publish. I was then very little known. This was very good evidence of analogy between his ideas and mine. He came

here expecting this government to assist his endeavors in Mexico; but the government had just then made up their quarrel with Spain. We met; he was pregnant with interesting facts. He gave me hundreds of particulars respecting Washington. In those days, I used to go to Oxstead, where there is a handsome gentleman's house, called Barrow Green, which was occupied by Koe's eldest brother. Burr went there with me; and once, when I went to Barrow Green, I lent him my house in Queen Square Place. He really meant to make himself emperor of Mexico. He told me I should be the legislator, and he would send a ship of war for me. He gave me an account of his duel with Hamilton. He was sure of being able to kill him; so I thought it little better than a murder. He seemed to be a man of prodigious intrepidity; and if his project had failed in Mexico, he meant to set up for a monarch in the United States.* He said the Mexicans would all follow like a flock of geese."

These temperate words (written years after) give no idea of the warmth of their friendship. In a few days, we find Colonel Burr living at Bentham's house, on the most affectionate terms with its master. His letters of this period are filled with allusions to his "great and good friend, Jeremy Bentham," of whom he seldom spoke but with enthusiasm. To Theodosia he said: "I am now writing in Mr. Bentham's room, and by his side. He wills it so, insisting that there is a sort of social intercourse in sitting near, and looking now and then at one another, though we are separately and ever so intensely employed. It is certainly so." In another letter, he told Theodosia that "Mr. Bentham's countenance had all that character of intense thought which she would expect to find; but it was impossible to conceive a physiognomy more strongly marked with ingenuousness and philanthropy. He is about sixty, but cheerful even to playfulness." To Governor Alston, he wrote: "He is, indeed, the most perfect model that I have seen or imagined of moral and intellectual excellence. He is the most intimate friend I have in this coun-

* The old gentleman's memory was at fault here.

try, and my constant associate." To Mrs. Prevost: "He must be dead a hundred years before he will be known; and then he will be adored."

Burr made every body whom he loved love his daughter; and so we soon see Bentham sending a set of his "combustibles" (works) to "my dear little Theodosia." She read them with delight. She caught her father's enthusiasm. One of the books, as yet, existed only in the French language, and Theodosia, in that graceful manner which invested all she did with a peculiar charm, solicited the privilege of translating it into English. The sage was enchanted, and the translation was begun.

It is evident that Colonel Burr stood very high in Bentham's regard. John Bowring, Bentham's biographer, says that the philosopher, in consequence of his communication with Colonel Burr, seemed seriously resolved on taking up his abode for some years on the table-lands of Mexico, and was only dissuaded by the extreme difficulty of getting there, and the representations of his friends. Bentham quaintly makes this project known to Lord Holland in a letter, dated October 31, 1808: "I feel myself," he wrote, "so pinched by the cold of our English winters, that a great part of the time that would otherwise be employed in driving the quill, is consumed in thinking of the cold, and endeavoring, but in vain, to keep off that unpleasant sensation without bringing on worse. But is there no heat in fire? Yes; but as it comes from our English fire-places, such is the heat, as neither my eyes, nor other parts about me, are able to endure. Between eyes and feet, perpetual quarrel about heat; feet never can have enough, eyes never little enough — a new edition of the old parable of the members. Mexico, from a variety of authorities, private, as well as public, I have learned to consider as affording a climate by which all such differences would be kept at rest. Temperature just what any body pleases. If you want it warmer, you go *down* a few hundred yards; if cooler, you go *up*."

That so cordial a feeling should have existed between two men who, in some particulars, were as complete contrasts as the

world could furnish, may well excite our surprise. In the very letter to Lord Holland just quoted, Bentham truly describes himself as "completely disqualified for every thing that in French is called Intrigue, or in English Politics." He was also so absent-minded as scarcely to be trusted in the streets alone. An instance of this infirmity used to be related by Colonel Burr, with a keen relish of its absurdity. The philosopher and himself were walking one day in Hyde Park, engaged in grave discourse upon subjects of high import, when, suddenly, the voice of Bentham ceased. Burr looked up. The sage stopped, mused a moment, turned upon his heel, and without one word of explanation, broke into a kind of gentle trot, and trotted homeward, never once looking back to his deserted companion. Burr gazed after him with wonder, but soon guessing the cause of this curious proceeding to be an "idea," merely, he continued his walk alone, and, in the course of an hour or two, went home to Bentham's house. He met the philosopher quite as usual, and neither Bentham nor himself ever alluded to the occurrence. Burr said that any one who should meet Bentham without knowing who he was, would have supposed him to be "a little touched in his upper story."

Bentham himself seems to have been struck by the oddity of such a friendship, and scarcely knew what to make of it. "I do believe," he wrote to Burr, at the end of one of the three-sheeted letters he used to send to him occasionally, "I do believe, that of the regard you have all along professed for me, no inconsiderable part is true. But a man must have his eyes well about him, when he has to deal with leaders of factions and professed men-catchers." And again: "To know that you were in any situation that could turn talents such as yours to the benefit of any considerable part of mankind would afford me the most heartfelt pleasure. In any other I should have said, on the opposite expectation, I can not even profess to give you any good wishes. For the trade of *throat-cutting* I can not see any openings. *Cabbage-planting* would be better, if, haply, any ground were to be got for it." Bentham's letters to Burr were gossipy and rambling, and amazingly

long — equivalent, some of them, to fifteen or twenty pages of foolscap.

Bentham never knew of Colonel Burr's pecuniary straits. Two or three years later, when he was reduced to the last extremity of indigence, he never breathed a syllable of his circumstances to Jeremy Bentham, who was then himself temporarily embarrassed. He visited the sage as usual, but could not tell him, as he did Godwin, the secret of his squalid lodgings. But this is anticipating.

For the present, Colonel Burr passed his time pleasantly enough. It was the era of mechanical inventions. The dream of the day was to do what Fulton had recently done, revolutionize a new branch of industry by a new application of steam. The memoirs and letters of that period, show it to have been *the fashion* to take an interest in things mechanical. Burr, besides the interest, which a man so intelligent as he could not but feel in the inventions of the time, had the idea that by some lucky hit of the kind he might retrieve his own fortunes. The mansion of the Earl of Bridgewater was then the resort of men with mechanical ideas, and we find Colonel Burr staying there a week at a time listening to their expositions. He confesses that he found it a bore. But it became the possible emperor of Mexico to understand the canal system, and he forced himself to attend, and to make the remarks expected of him. On one occasion, he speaks of going out of his way to see the new railroad, on which he beheld with wonder, four horses draw forty-four tons of merchandise. One night he was sleepless with an idea of improving the steam engine.*

* The following letter from Samuel Swartwout (who was also in London) to Burr, is worth inserting on many accounts. It is from the valuable autograph collection of F. J. Dreer, Esq., of Philadelphia, to whose courtesy I am indebted for permission to copy it. The letter is dated London, Thursday, 26th August, 1808, and is addressed to "Colonel Burr, at Mr. Bentham's, Barrow Green."

"DEAR SIR: I called yesterday at Mr. Smith's lodgings, Great Marlborough-street, but he was not in town. I left your letter with my address, request-

He led an active life. We catch glimpses of him, in his swift diary, rushing from office to office; "walking fifty miles" to find a suitable present for "Gampillo;" dining with "the ladies of Holland House;" going to the play with the Godwins; talking politics with Bentham; expounding Mexico

ing to know when I should see him. I have heard nothing since. I shall call again to-day.

"I have had a long conversation this morning with a young gentleman, a partner with Strong & Davis, New York, who has come over on business for them, in the last packet. He knows you. His name is John Mills. In the course of conversation he mentioned that the article of *cotton bagging*, which is prohibited by the late law of the United States, is, in the southern States, and in the Territories of Orleans and Mississippi, a dollar a yard. Here it may be bought for 6*d.* sterling. Pray, could not a quantity, say, 200,000 yards, be sent from this country to Mobile or St. Mary's; and thence got into the islands and Territories by smuggling? If your knowledge of the *ground* enables you to manage such a speculation, perhaps it might be accomplished. The immense advance in this article, and its being one of the specially prohibited articles, which, in case the embargo is raised will but increase in price, encourages me to hope that some great speculation might be made in it. Mr. Mills was lately in Charleston, where he purchased a quantity of cotton at 13 cents — nearly 500 bales — and he says the planters will not be able to put up their next crop for want of bagging. The price is now 600 per cent. above the cost here, and the expenses of transportation — and in case the embargo should be taken off, the demand for cotton and the want of bagging — will raise it perhaps double what it now is. The immense profit can not be doubted.

"Would the hazard be greater, or so great, in any other part of the United States?

"Would not the collector at New Orleans let a schooner in with 200,000 yards on board for a couple or three thousand guineas? St. Mary's, I think, would be another charming place to try it. The cost of a whole ship-load, or of 200,000 yards, would be only four to five thousand pounds. A thousand or twelve hundred pounds more, would fit out the vessel, and if she succeeded in getting safe into port and in selling her cargo, the profits would be immense — 600 per cent. This laid out in cotton there, at the present low price, would make another 100 per cent. — so that in all it would be one of the greatest speculations ever made; if, as —— said, it could be effected.

"Have the goodness to let me know by return of the mail, what you think of my wild scheme. I inclose a letter and two cards which will explain themselves.

"Ever affectionately and devotedly yours,
"S. SWARTWOUT."

to men whom the next change of ministers might bring into power; undergoing tortures with his peruke; writing law-papers in support of his claim to be considered a British subject; reading all literature, from Milton on Divorce to the last French farce; conversing with all men, from cabinet ministers to barbers; gallanting all women, from duchesses to chambermaids.

Theodosia was languishing, meanwhile. In November came eloquent, melancholy letters from her to her father. Saratoga, whither she had gone after his departure, had not relieved her depressing complaint. The failure of her father's plans, the uncertainty of his future, and, in particular, the non-pay ment of a large sum of money due him in New York, on which he depended, racked her noble heart with anxiety. "Return to me," she cried to him across the sea, "or tell me that you are engaged in a pursuit worthy of you." "O, my guardian angel, why were you obliged to abandon me just when enfeebled nature doubly required your care! How often, when my tongue and hands trembled with disease, have I besought Heaven either to reunite us, or let me die at once. Yet do not hence imagine that I yield to infantine lamentations or impatience. As soon as relief from pain restored me in some measure to myself, I became more worthy the happiness of being your daughter." She speaks of her return to New York for the winter, and adds: "My situation will not have the charms we supposed. Indeed, I find that your presence threw a luster on every thing around you. Every thing is gayer, more elegant, more pleasant, where you are." But this was not all the reason why "dear New York," as she sometimes called the home of her happy childhood, was no longer agreeable to her. The daughter had to share the father's odium, though that daughter was the lovely and accomplished Mrs. Alston. "The world," she wrote, "begins to cool terribly around me. You would be surprised how many I supposed attached to me have abandoned the sorry losing game of disinterested friendship." One regrets to see at the end of such letters the signature of "Mary Ann Edwards," and "dear brother" at the beginning; "X" for

Mexico, and "60" for Aaron Burr. But she was obliged to write so.

The father's anxiety was aroused. He consulted the most celebrated physicians of London, who seconded the thought his wish had fathered, in recommending a voyage to Europe for the sick lady. Burr's heart was instantly set upon his daughter's joining him. Preparations were made for her reception with his usual promptness. At every port where she could possibly land measures were taken against her arrival. Bentham offered her his house. General Sir Samuel Bentham, brother of the author, was to take "Gampillus" home to be educated with his own children, whom Burr declared to be the best brought up of all the children he had ever known. The most minute directions were forwarded to Theodosia respecting the voyage, and the course to be pursued on landing. To travel *post* from Falmouth to London, he tells her, will cost twenty-five guineas; but the canal boats from Liverpool have neatly-furnished rooms with fire-places, and go forty or fifty miles a day for less than half the expense of travel by land. He writes to Governor Alston to insure his consent to the voyage, and offering to pay half the expense out of his slender means; for planters were then embarrassed. His care and forethought for her were, indeed, all that the most affectionate of fathers could bestow upon the most beloved of daughters. In one of his letters to her, written about this time, there is a touching passage. He is telling her that he is always in danger of being too late with his letters for America. "My letters to others," he adds, "are always ready; but toward *you*, a desire to say something at the last moment; a reluctance resembling that of parting — but all this you know and feel."

His project was never carried out. As the winter drew on, her disease took a favorable turn, and the proposed voyage was given up. How much better it might have been for both father and child if they had come together then! In the spring she went home to South Carolina, whence three times the climate had driven her. "I would not have tried a fourth experiment of the kind upon a dog," wrote Colonel Burr in

wrath when he heard the news. Her health, however, was permanently improved, and his fears were never realized.

Colonel Burr lived in London nearly six months. He was in doubt what to do, or whither to go. To stay in Europe seemed useless; yet nothing had occurred to tempt him home. His desires pointed homeward, and he seems to have hoped to return ere long. Meanwhile, he resolved on making the grand tour of the kingdom, and on the morning of December the 22d, 1808, he set out on his journey northward in the Oxford coach.

The page of his diary in which he describes his departure from the metropolis and his adventures on the road to Oxford, may serve as an illustration of his mode of journalizing. He was too late for the coach, but pursued and overtook it. He continues: — "Found in it one man. Having preserved perfect silence for a few minutes, by way of experiment, I remarked that the day was very mild, which he flatly denied, and in a tone and manner as if he would have bit me. I laughed out heartily, and very kindly inquired into his morning's adventures. He was old, gouty, and very fat. No hack being to be had at that early hour, or, what is more probable, choosing to save the shilling, he had walked from his house to the inn, had fallen twice, got wet and bruised, and was very sure that he should be laid up with the gout for six months. I sympathized with his misfortunes. Wondered at the complacency with which he bore them, and joined him in cursing the weather, the streets, and the hackney coachmen. He became complacent and talkative. Such is John Bull. We took in another fat man, a woman still fatter, and a boy. Afterward, a very pretty, graceful, arch-looking girl, about eighteen, going on a visit to her aunt, Lady W. But mademoiselle was reserved and distant. At the first change of horses she agreed to take breakfast, which we did, tête-à-tête. I was charmed to find her all animation, gayety, ease, badinage. By the aid of drink to the coachman, our companions were kept three quarters of an hour cooling in the coach. They had breakfasted. When we joined them the reserve of my little siren returned. After various fruitless essays, and at first without

suspecting the cause, finding it impossible to provoke any thing beyond a cold monosyllable, I composed myself to sleep, and slept soundly about eight hours, between London and Oxford, where we arrived at eight this evening. (There must be something narcotic in the air of this island. I have slept more during my six months' residence in Great Britain than in any preceding three years of my life since the age of fourteen.) Took leave of my little Spartan. *Mem.*—To write an essay, historical and critical, on the education and treatment of women in England. Its influence on morals and happiness."

He remained a day or two at Oxford, receiving the requisite attentions from residents to whom he had brought letters. He thought "every thing there was more for ostentation than for use." At a dinner given him by one of the Oxonians he agitated the serene atmosphere of the place by praising Bentham. The mention of that name was enough to revive interest in all the great, dividing subjects. Burr found his Oxford friends prepared to concede Bentham's greatness as a legislator, but not as a moralist; whereas *he* extolled his morality and benevolence above all things. The discussion, it appears, grew warm. The subject of divorce came up, Burr defending Bentham's opinions. Religion was discoursed of, Burr arguing against the Gospel according to Oxford. "We then," he says, "got upon American politics, geography, etc., on all of which a most profound and learned ignorance was displayed. The evening wound up pleasantly, and we parted with many expressions of courtesy." Of his entertainer on this occasion, he adds this remark: "Though he speaks of Bentham with reverence, and, probably, prays for him, I presume that he thinks he will be eternally damned, and I have no doubt he expects to be lolling in Abraham's bosom with great complacency, hearing Bentham sing out for a drop of water. Such is the mild genius of our holy religion."

Continuing his journey northward, he is entertained on the road to Birmingham by "a pretty little comely brunette," who had read all the novels and seen all the lions, and whose rank he puzzled himself in vain to determine. At length they put her down at a respectable farm house, Burr handed her

in, was introduced to the family as a "gentleman who had been extremely polite to me on the road," and was warmly pressed to stay, and to call on his return. Such an easy power had this man to ingratiate himself with the fair. He went to Stratford to see the tomb of Shakespeare, concerning which visit he only remarks, that the *bar-maid* gave him a very detailed account of the late Shaekspearean jubilee. At Birmingham he enters in his diary some mysterious hints of a gay street adventure which cost him twenty-eight shillings, for which he tells Theodosia he atoned by taking a cheap outside place to Edinburg, instead of a dear inside one.

At Edinburg, where he remained a month, his life was a ceaseless round of gayety. His London letters and his own celebrity combined to insure him a welcome among the élite of the society at the Scottish capital.

At Edinburg, then a place of brilliant intellect and easy virtue, Colonel Burr was a drawing-room and dinner-table lion. Parties, balls, assemblies, dinners, plays, succeeded one another. Edinburg, he said, was the most social and hospitable place he had ever seen: they meet to amuse and to be amused, and they succeed. He gave himself up to the enjoyments of the hour to a degree not usual with him. He told Bentham, to whom he wrote nearly every day, that in his present "state of nullity," he wished to be forgotten by all his friends, till he could "rise to view" in a form worthy of their hopes. For a month, business was forgotten.

With the legal and the literary magnates of the town he soon became intimate. McKenzie, author of the "Man of Feeling," was then at the height of his reputation, and Walter Scott was in the *Marmion* period of his literary career. "I met both frequently," wrote Burr to Theodosia, "and from both received civilities and hospitalities. McKenzie has twelve children; six daughters, all very interesting, and two very handsome. He is remarkably sprightly in company; amiable, witty; might pass for forty-eight, though certainly much older. Scott, with less softness than McKenzie, has still more animation; talks much, and very agreeably. May be about forty." He found warm friends among the lawyers

and judges of Edinburg, with some of whom he continued to correspond for years after. At one dinner party, composed chiefly of legal gentlemen, he spoke so convincingly in praise of Bentham, that most of the company took a list of his works on the spot. He was the champion of Bentham wherever he went. He wrote to the philosopher: "When I find a man who knows nothing of you, which (with blushes be it said) has sometimes happened, I pity him; but when one, pretending a knowledge of your works, uses 'very able, very ingenious,' or any such trite epithets, I hate him, and am disposed to quarrel."

This month in Edinburg was the most triumphant, if not the happiest, period of Colonel Burr's long residence in Europe. Besides being "loaded with civilities" there, he heard that Cobbett,* "deeply impregnated with the magnitude of his talents as a statesman and soldier," was consulting with other friends in London how the ex-Vice-President of the United States could be brought into the British Parliament. Bentham shook his more sagacious head, however. He thought the oath of allegiance taken by Burr to the American government was a circumstance fatal to the project; which, indeed, was never more than talked of.

From the gayeties of Edinburg, Colonel Burr was unexpectedly summoned by letters from London, which gave him a gleam of hope. Back he flies to London at the beginning of February, and is at once immersed in "X.'s affairs." We find him soon closeted with Lord Melville, a man famous in the politics of that day, who had expressly, and unsolicited, invited Colonel Burr to his house for the purpose of learning more of his plans. The interview was long, and agreeable to both. "Lord Melville," said Burr, afterward, "is a man I understand, and by whom I could be understood." Nothing of importance, however, came of the interview, or could come of an interview with any man in Europe, while European affairs remained as they were; and the decisive change was still five years distant. Transient, indeed, was this revival of his dream. In March, Burr wrote that he saw clearly that his

* Cobbett had been a friend of Burr's in the United States.

longer stay in Europe was useless, and announced his intention to return to America after the arrival of the next packet. The packet came, but still the adventurer lingered.

It was in these days that he caught his first glimpse of that demon of Impecuniosity, which afterward haunted him so pertinaciously, and which he battled with such indomitable gayety and spirit. He had bought some books for Governor Alston of a London bookseller, the remittance for the payment of which had not arrived, and Burr was threatened with arrest for the amount. But his exchequer was running low. (The very passage-money which brought him to England was borrowed from Dr. Hosack, who accompanied Hamilton to the scene of the duel.) A month ago he had told Theodosia, in his dark manner, that "59 was not immediately wanted, though the want of *him* had prevented an experiment he wished to make in X.'s affairs;" a communication which becomes intelligible when we substitute the word *money* for "59." But the payment of such a sum as two hundred pounds was out of the question. He accordingly removed his residence from the hospitable house of Jeremy Bentham to lodgings much more obscure, and changed his name to Kirby. "The benevolent heart of J. B.," said Burr in his diary, "shall never be wrung by the spectacle of Gamp's arrest." The affair was compromised soon after, and "Gamp" was never arrested *for debt*.

Early in the following month occurred an event which obliged him to come to a very prompt decision with regard to his future course. Cobbett must have smiled when he heard of it, and thought of his consultation with Bentham upon the practicability of getting Burr into Parliament.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

EXPULSION FROM GREAT BRITAIN, AND RESIDENCE IN SWEDEN.

His Arrest — Compelled to Leave the Country — Letter to Lord Liverpool — Sails for Sweden — Arrival in Stockholm — His Residence in Stockholm — His Impressions of Sweden — Pleasant Incident.

It was the 4th of April, 1809. Mr. "Kirby" had been for some weeks in his new lodgings. Certain indications of his being under *surveillance* had not escaped his notice, and a vague sense of impending disaster had oppressed him at times. The feeling grew so strong that, on the morning of the day above named, he resolved to remove to another part of the town. He had packed up his clothes and papers, and was about to seek other apartments, when he was surprised by the entrance, unannounced, and without knocking, of four coarse-looking men, who bluntly informed him that they had a warrant for his arrest, and for the seizure of his papers. He asked to see the warrant. They refused to show it. He peremptorily demanded to know by whose authority they acted. Upon this, they produced the warrant, and permitted him to glance over it, but not to read it through. He saw that it was signed *Liverpool*, the name of the premier. He was a prisoner of state.

The men took possession of his trunks, ransacked the room for papers, and threw all that they found, with all other loose articles, into a sack. Then, calling a coach, they conveyed the prisoner and his property to the alien office, the head of which, Mr. John Reeves, was one of Colonel Burr's most intimate friends. The prisoner, refusing to leave the carriage, sent in a note to Mr. Reeves, stating what had occurred, and asking an explanation. No answer for an hour. It was a cold afternoon, and the prisoner grew impatient. He sent another

note urgently requesting Reeves to come to the carriage, and spare him the mortification of entering the office as a prisoner. Mr. Reeves appeared, but he could give no explanation, and, after advising the prisoner to be patient, reëntered the office. After another half hour of waiting, orders came for him to be taken to the house of a Mr. Hughes, one of the government messengers, who was to be responsible for his safe-keeping. Upon hearing this, Colonel Burr alighted, and went to the office of one of the under secretaries, in the same building, bent on discovering the cause and motive of his arrest. But neither the under secretary nor any of the clerks would recognize him; though, says Burr to Theodosia, "every devil of them knew me as well as I know you." He saw that his detention was a thing resolved upon, and not to be avoided, and submitted with a good grace. About four o'clock in the afternoon, he drove away to his temporary prison, at No. 31 Stafford Place, leaving his effects at the alien office, to be examined by the authorities at their leisure.

He dined agreeably enough, with the messenger and his pretty young wife, and afterward read the only two readable books in the house, the play of the Secret, and the Agricola of Tacitus. Then, discovering that his polite jailor played chess, he sat down with him to the game, and played till the man was almost crazed with excitement. Toward morning, he wrote in his diary a brief history of the day's adventures and went to bed.

The next day, no change. No one was permitted to see him. He was anxious only on account of his papers; not, he averred, because there were any plots or treasons in them, but because of his "ridiculous journal," and his peculiar correspondence. Chess again with Hughes till the small hours of the morning.

On the third day, an official summons came from the alien office; whither, at ten o'clock in the morning, the prisoner was conducted. Lord Liverpool did not appear, but sent an apology and a message. The apology related to his sudden and unceremonious arrest; the message, couched in the blandest terms, as disagreeable messages frequently are, was to the

effect that the presence of Colonel Burr in Great Britain was embarrassing to his majesty's government, and that it was the wish and expectation of the government that he should remove. A disposition was professed to treat him with personal respect and courtesy. Passports should be furnished; a free passage to any port where British ships might go, was tendered; but the request for his prompt departure was decided. Burr, astonished, desired to be informed of the reasons of this extraordinary conduct. In what had he offended? What was the purpose of his banishment? To all such questions, neither then, nor ever, was any answer whatever vouchsafed.

Burr attributed this summary measure to a desire on the part of the English cabinet to conciliate, by one easy and inexpensive act, the American government and the Spanish Juntas. He said, in a letter written just after his arrest: "Mr. Jefferson, or the Spanish Juntas, or probably both, have had influence enough to drive me out of this country." Perhaps this supposition was correct, and it derives probability from the fact that publicity was immediately given to the whole transaction in the newspapers. Theodosia first heard of her father's expulsion from Great Britain through the newspapers, though he wrote to her by every ship, Yet the reason assigned by Lord Liverpool was sufficient, in those days, to account for the step. His presence must have been *embarrassing* in the extreme. Here was an erratic, mysterious person, known to have revolutionary political designs, an object of suspicion to two governments, both of which Great Britain wished to propitiate; an able, efficient man, moving in the highest circles, changing his name without apparent cause, concealing his residence, and vailing all his movements in silence and ciphers. An embarrassing person truly, particularly in times so critical. Who could tell what schemes were revolving in that active brain? Lord Liverpool, had there been no Mr. Jefferson to soothe and no Juntas to mollify, might have felt the presence of such a man embarrassing.

Colonel Burr at once signified his willingness to comply with the "wish and expectation" of the government. In explaining the reason of his ready acquiescence, he used to say

that it would have been easy for him to set the government at defiance, and to maintain his residence; but the political situation of the United States and Great Britain, and some private considerations, induced him to comply. He was then set at liberty, and his effects were restored to him uninjured.

But whither to go? This question was much discussed between Colonel Burr and the government. A formal letter written by him to Lord Liverpool upon the subject may be introduced here in continuance of the narrative. The writing of this epistle seems to have cost him an effort. He told Jeremy Bentham that when he sat down to write it, and essayed to begin, "My lord," his pen stuck in his fingers. "I tried in vain, but could not get it out; so I adopted the stiff, diplomatic third person. *My* lady or *his* lordship does not stick in my savage throat; but my *lord*—the Lord deliver me!" The letter to Lord Liverpool, dated April 20th, 1809, was as follows:

"Mr. Burr's respectful compliments. He lately received from Lord Liverpool an intimation that his (Mr. Burr's) presence was embarrassing to his majesty's government, and that it was the wish and the expectation of the government that he would remove. Without insisting on those rights which, as a natural-born subject, he might legally assert; without permitting himself to inquire whether the motives to the order were personal or political, or whether the apprehensions expressed were real or factitious, and without adverting to the unprovoked indignities which had preceded the order, or to the personal inconveniences which it would impose on him, Mr. Burr at once expressed his determination to gratify the wishes of the government by withdrawing. It being understood that he could not, consistently with his personal safety, visit any country under the control or influence of France, Sweden was thought the most proper asylum; and the gentleman who spoke in his lordship's name, having represented Heligoland as a place whence passages to Sweden could readily be found, Mr. Burr, relying on this assurance, assented to that voyage, and passports were made out accordingly. But it is now ascertained that this assurance was predicated in

error; that there is, in fact, no direct communication between Heligoland and any part of Sweden, and that no such passage could probably be found within many months. Under such circumstances, Mr. Burr presumes that Lord Liverpool will permit the destination to be changed to Gottenburg, and will have the goodness to direct passports to be made for that port. He has reason to believe that the minister of his Swedish majesty to this court will not object."

The point was yielded. The Swedish minister, so far from objecting, took pains to secure him a friendly reception in Sweden. On the 24th of April he sailed from Harwich in the packet, which, in six days, bore him to Gottenburg, a Swedish port three hundred miles from Stockholm. He was soon established in lodgings which, he said, were "commodious," with the single exception that not a soul in the house spoke one word of any language with which he was acquainted.

He experienced the usual exhilaration of being for the first time in a *foreign* country, and sallied eagerly forth to see the town. He found his way to the theater, where he understood not a word, but was "amused by two young girls in boy's clothes, tight pantaloons and short waistcoats, who played admirably" in the pantomime. He adds in his swift, brief way: "Out at ten. Got home, but could not make my host understand that I wanted a dish of tea. After laboring in vain for a quarter of an hour, was obliged to take him out to the house of a Frenchman, who spoke Swedish, and who explained for us. Tea was got very cheerfully. A long pipe and tobacco."

In a few days he left Gottenburg for Stockholm, where he intended to reside during his stay in Sweden. He reached the capital late in the evening of the 11th of May, and finding the inns full, was indebted to a fellow traveler for getting him a room in the house of a mechanic in an alley near the Exchange.

The next day, on presenting some of his letters, he received in superfluity all those attentions which a stranger in a strange land requires. He was soon established as an inhabitant of Stockholm; and played with his usual easy grace the part of the Distinguished Guest in its highest circles. It is a proof

of the facility with which he made his way in society, that before he had been in Stockholm a week, he was dining magnificently with the most exclusive club in the kingdom, and was running about the city trying to borrow a cocked hat and sword to wear on his presentation at court. His mastery of the French stood him in good stead here. An officer of rank, at one of his early parties in Stockholm, told him that he spoke French better than English, and asked him which of the European languages the language of the Americans most resembled? Burr's cool audacity was shown at another grand dinner party, where, on being asked for a toast, he gave, *The Royal Prisoners*, meaning the exiled royal family of Spain. This was for the Spanish embassador, who was present, and who, says Burr, received the toast with exquisite sensibility, and was moved even to tears. He passed his time chiefly in society, his only serious employments being the study of the Swedish laws and the learning of the language. He was almost severed from his former life. There was with him his young friend and coadjutor, Hosack (younger brother of Dr. Hosack) who came with him from London, but they resided apart. Once in Stockholm he was agreeably reminded of his country by learning that two American captains and a young American traveler were in the city, and wished to meet him. The five Americans dined together, "à l' Americaine, on beefsteaks, fish, and potatoes." Once, he conceived suddenly the idea of returning to America and establishing himself at Charleston, near Theodosia; but second thoughts condemned the idea. Occasionally, but not nearly as often as before, he received letters from his daughter. She had no good news to cheer him with. She tells him of her continued disappointment with regard to the receipt of the money which he had meant for his support in Europe. She was "stunned" upon hearing of his "removal from England," and could not enough admire the gay fortitude of his demeanor under circumstances, the mere contemplation of which racked her soul with anxiety. These are her words:

"The accumulated difficulties which pour in upon us would absolutely overwhelm any other being than yourself. Indeed,

I witness your extraordinary fortitude with new wonder at every new misfortune. Often, after reflecting on this subject, you appear to me so superior, so elevated above all other men; I contemplate you with such a strange mixture of humility, admiration, reverence, love, and pride, that very little superstition would be necessary to make me worship you as a superior being: such enthusiasm does your character excite in me. When I afterward revert to myself, how insignificant do my best qualities appear. My vanity would be greater if I had not been placed so near you; and yet my pride is our relationship. I had rather not live than not be the daughter of such a man."

He was, indeed, a man invincible. In all the mass of his journals and letters, there can not be found one word indicative of repining, repentance, or melancholy. Not one. Circumstances often controlled and thwarted, but never for one instant subdued him.

Colonel Burr lived five months in Sweden; three months at Stockholm, and two in traveling about the country. He liked Sweden, and the lively Swedes liked him. To Mr. Gahn, the Swedish consul at New York, a warm and firm friend, to whom he owed the introductions which made his residence in Sweden so pleasant, he wrote in glowing terms of the country.

"I have never known," he said, "in any country or at any time, five months of weather so uniformly fine. The excellence of the roads has been a constant subject of admiration to me; much superior to those of England, and all free of toll. In traveling more than twelve hundred English miles, I have never found a bridge out of order, nor an obstruction in the road which could retard your progress for a second. There is no country in which traveling is at once so cheap, expeditious, and secure. All travelers have borne testimony to Swedish honesty, but no one has attempted to discover the cause of a distinction so honorable. I have sought for it in their laws, in their social and municipal institutions, particularly in the judicial department. There is no country with whose jurisprudence I am acquainted in which personal liberty is *so well secured;* none in which the violation of it is punished

with so much certainty and promptitude; none in which civil justice is administered with so much dispatch and so little expense. These are strong assertions, but I shall bring with me the proofs. It is surprising, it is unaccountable, that a system differing so essentially from every other in Europe, and so fraught with valuable matter, should have remained to this day locked up in the Swedish and Runic tongues, and that not the slightest information on this interesting subject could be found either in English or French. I should have thought that some Swede, from national pride, if not from philanthropy, would have diffused the knowledge of them throughout Europe."

He liked the sensibility of the cultivated Swedes. Of a concert which he attended at Stockholm, he writes in his diary: "Every part was executed extremely to my satisfaction; but what most interested me was the perfect attention, and the uncommon degree of feeling exhibited by the audience. I have nowhere witnessed the like. Every countenance was affected by those emotions to which the music was adapted. In England you see no expression painted on the visage at a concert. All is somber and grim. They cry 'bravo! bravissimo,' with the same countenance that they 'G—d damn.'

To one Swedish custom, however, he objects. "Do remind me," he writes to Theodosia, "to give you a dissertation on locking doors. Every person, of every sex and grade, comes in without knocking. Plump into your bedroom. They do not seem at all embarrassed, nor think of apologizing at finding you in bed, or dressing, or doing—no matter what, but go right on and tell their story as if all were right. If the door be locked and the key outside (they use altogether spring-locks here), no matter; they unlock the door, and in they come. It is vain to desire them to knock; they do not comprehend you, and if they do, pay no manner of attention to it. It took me six weeks to teach my old Anna not to come in without knocking; and, finally, it was only by appearing to get into a most violent passion, and threatening to blow out her brains, which she had not the least doubt I would do

without ceremony. I engage she is the only servant in all Sweden who ever knocks. Notwithstanding all my caution, I have been almost every day disturbed in this way, and once last week was surprised in the most awkward situation imaginable. So, madam, when you come to Sevenska, remember to lock the door, and to take the key inside."*

One more mad entry in his journal. He was assailed by bed-bugs: "Got up, and attempted to light candle, but in vain. Had flint and matches, but only some shreds of punk, which would not catch. Recollected a gun which I had had on a very late journey; filled the pan with powder, and was just going to flash it, when it occurred that, though I had not loaded it, some one else might. Tried, and found it a very heavy charge. What a fine alarm it would have made if I had fired. Then poured out some powder on a piece of paper, put the shreds of punk with it, and, after fifty essays, succeeded in firing the powder; but it being quite dark, had put more powder than intended; my shirt caught fire; the papers on my table caught fire; burned my fingers to a blister, the

* To show how differently the same thing affects different minds, I quote the following from one of Bayard Taylor's recent letters from Sweden: "There is something exceedingly primitive and unsophisticated in the manners of these northern people — a straightforward honesty, which takes the honesty of others for granted — a latent kindness and good-will which may at first be overlooked, because it is not demonstrative, and a total unconsciousness of what is called, in highly civilized circles, 'propriety.' The very freedom of manners which, in some countries, might denote laxity of morals, is here the evident stamp of their purity. The thought has often recurred to me — which is the most truly pure and virginal nature, the fastidious American girl, who blushes at the sight of a pair of boots outside a gentleman's bedroom door, and who requires that certain unoffending parts of the body and articles of clothing should be designated by delicately circumlocutious terms, or the simple-minded Swedish women, who come into our bedrooms with coffee, and make our fires while we get up and dress, coming and going during all the various stages of the toilet, with the frankest unconsciousness of impropriety? This is modesty in its healthy and natural development, not in those morbid forms which suggest an imagination ever on the alert for prurient images. Nothing has confirmed my impression of the virtue of the northern Swedes more than this fact, and I have rarely felt more respect for woman, or more faith in the inherent purity of her nature."

left hand, fortunately. It seemed like a general conflagration. Succeeded, however, in lighting my candle, and passed the night, till five this morning, in smoking, reading, and writing this."

The last incident of his Swedish experience was the most agreeable one. A young man, Luning by name, had formed an enthusiastic friendship for Colonel Burr at Stockholm. Something led the warm-hearted Swede to suspect that his friend was embarrassed for money, which, indeed, was the fact toward the close of his residence in Sweden. His purse ran low enough to alarm a man less confident in the resources of his wit. A few days after he had left the country, and left it never to return, he received a letter from Mr. Luning which, in his broken English, ran thus: "It may very easy be the case, that by the behaviour of your agent, who took the —— rix-dolls., or by the interruption of correspondence between Germany and England, you may come in any embarrassment, I take myself the liberty to send you the inclosed letter, at the producing of which Mr. H. Brauer will pay you one thousand marks, Hamburg currency, which you'll please to reimburse when you arrive in England or America. I can not tell you how much I am thankful to Providence for having given me the pleasure to get acquainted with a man whom I admired long ago. I esteemed you before, now I love you."

"Did you ever hear of any thing to equal this, except in novels?" wrote Burr in his diary that night.

As he was leaving Sweden, he learned that he had been the subject of discussion in the newspapers for a considerable time. But his heart and his skin were hardened against newspapers, and he had not the curiosity to inquire what the Swedish editors had to say about him.

CHAPTER XXIX.

LOVE-CHASE IN GERMANY, AND JOURNEY TO PARIS.

Leaves Sweden — Two Weeks at Copenhagen — At Hamburg — Cut by the Americans — The Lady Dentist — Passports Delayed — Tour in Germany — At Weimar — Goethe — Wieland — The Ducal Court — Goethe's Theater — Odd Rencontre with the Duchess — A Serious Passion — Anecdote — At Gotha — His Familiarity with the Duke — The Princess Louise — Incidents at the Frankfort Ball.

Colonel Burr had taken the bold resolution of attempting to reach Paris, giving out that he feared the Stockholm winter, and was going to Paris as a traveler merely.

He left Sweden on the 21st of October, 1809, in company with the two young New Yorkers, Hosack and Robinson, and crossed in an open boat to Elsinore on the coast of Denmark. On the magnificent terrace there, fronting the sea, he saw with interest the square stone pillar, four feet high, which enjoys the lucrative reputation of marking the tomb of Hamlet. For a day or two the party lingered in the curious, ancient town, and then proceeded to Copenhagen.

Burr spent two weeks at that interesting capital. As was his wont, he became acquainted with every body of importance and saw every thing of interest. Here, too, he found himself to be a well-known person, the leading facts of his life being familiar to well-informed Danes. His stay was rendered the more agreeable by the friendship and hospitality of Mr. Olsen, whom Colonel Burr had formerly known as the Danish embassador to the United States. The libraries and scientific collections of Copenhagen occupied much of the travelers' attention; they are on a stupendous scale considering the resources of the kingdom, and attest its ancient culture. He was making a little collection of coins for his grandson, and

happening to inquire where such things were sold, it was noised abroad that he was learned in the coin-science; a reputation which he found awkward in a city which boasts a collection of forty thousand specimens, and where the subject was pursued with enthusiasm. He was much in the courts of Copenhagen. The "Committees of Conciliation," a feature of the Danish legal system which he greatly admired, were minutely inquired into by him, and he told the learned judge who gave him the information on the subject, that he intended, on his return home, to recommend his countrymen to adopt the idea. But perhaps it was the possible emperor of Mexico who made these inquiries.

From Copenhagen, by easy stages in a wicker wagon, the three Americans made their way to Hamburg; or rather to Altona, the Danish port which adjoins Hamburg. Hamburg itself, being more decidedly under French influence at that time than Denmark, Colonel Burr thought it best to fix his residence in the Danish city, the gates of the two places being only a third of a mile apart.

He had now to encounter a complication of hostile circumstances. For the last six months, he had been out of the great movements of the time, in a safe and peaceful haven. But Hamburg was within the circle of activity, and many Americans were there, merchants, captains, travelers, and others, all of whom proved inimical to him. The ex-Vice-President was *cut* by them all, and other marks of disrespect were shown him. "What a lot of rascals they must be," he wrote, when he heard of their hostility, "to make war on one whom they do not know; or one *who never did harm or wished harm to a human being!* Yet they, perhaps, are not to be blamed, for they are influenced by what they hear." He heard, too, that the news of his intended journey had been announced in the Paris newspapers, and "in a manner no way auspicious." He applied in form for passports to Paris, and discovered that passports to Paris were more easily asked for in those contentious times than obtained. He was kept long waiting for a decisive answer. Weeks slipped by, and his stock of money was exhausted. At one time, in Hamburg, he was literally

penniless. It was then that, against his will and contrary to his intention, he used the bill for a thousand marks sent him by the generous Luning. He was in doubt whether he could continue his journey to the French capital; England was closed against him; his own countrymen abhorred him; he was destitute of resources. It is no wonder that in such circumstances he shrunk from writing home. "What can I write?" he said. "To be silent as to my intended movements would be strange, and to tell the true state of things afflicting to my friends."

But never was he in better spirits. His diary, always lively, becomes, during this period, frolicksome and comic. Pages of it are filled with the ludicrous history of a toothache that racked him for days and nights. He narrates all the various means tried for quelling the rebellion, till he was driven to the only remedy that never fails. He was directed to the residence of a dentist, where he was received with excessive politeness by a gentleman and lady! The *lady* approached him in a lively, officious manner, and was about to apply her hands to his face. Not relishing such an advance at that particular moment, he begged her not to trouble herself, and informed her that he had come to have a tooth drawn.

"Very well, monsieur, it is I who will do the business for you."

"You, madam?"

"Yes, I."

"But, really, is there strength enough in those little hands of yours?"

"You shall see, monsieur."

He submitted. The tooth was drawn with dexterity, and he rewarded the fair operator with a ducat and a kiss.

The best society of Hamburg and Altona threw open wide its doors to the celebrated traveler. Judges, advocates, embassadors, city officials, professors, with their families and friends, were the daily associates of the man whom his countrymen shunned, and who had been lately obliged to pawn his pencil, for lack of the sous wherewith to pay the toll of a bridge. His most interesting acquaintance was Professor

Ebeling, a man prodigiously versed in the statistics of the United States. "His library of American books is nearly as large as all the Richmond Hill library," wrote Burr to his daughter. To this vast collection Colonel Burr was able to add some recent statistics, and a valuable map of Carolina, which were of great use to the learned professor. A warm feeling sprung up between them. Ebeling sent Theodosia a set of his works, and gave Burr valuable introductions to scholars in Germany, whither he was preparing to go. One of these was to "Mr. Niebuhr," whom Ebeling described as "the son of the celebrated Arabian traveler," who is now chiefly known to the world as the father of the historian. Niebuhr was then privy councillor to the king, and had not yet lectured on Roman history.

After much negotiation, and many interviews with embassadors and other magnates, permission to visit Paris reached Colonel Burr, just as he was leaving Denmark for a short tour in Germany. He continued his journey, notwithstanding, and passed six exciting weeks in Germany. He visited Hanover, Brunswick, Gottingen, Gotha, Weimar, Frankfort, and intermediate places; at each of which he saw the most interesting persons.

At Gottingen, he became intimate with Professor Heeren, then in the prime of his celebrity. "Professor Heeren," he wrote in his diary one evening, "told me two very important articles of news. 1st, The divorce of emperor and empress. The manner of it is noble and worthy of him. 2d, *The emperor's assent to the independence of Mexico and the other Spanish colonies.* Now why the devil didn't he tell me of this two years ago?" And why did Aaron Burr linger in Germany when, at last, it *was* told him? We shall see in a moment.

Weimar he reached on the 2d of January, 1810. Five delightful days he passed at that illustrious abode of genius, and saw the great men and great personages, whose residence at Weimar immortalized its name. Goethe, then in his majestic prime, our traveler met several times, and attended an evening party at his house; but, unfortunately, adds not a word to the bare mention of the fact. He became somewhat intimate

with "the amiable and good Wieland." He enjoyed a tête-a-tête with the Baroness De Stein. He was presented at court, dined with the ducal family, and took tea with the princely ladies, "all in calico and *en famille*." "The princess Caroline would be happy to see him any morning," said la Baronne De Stein. At the theater, the celebrated theater, Goethe's theater, he saw a "serious comedy" performed "perfectly to his satisfaction," while the duke, Goethe's duke, sat in his little open side box, without an attendant, and in plain clothes.

A curious renconter he had in the streets of Weimar. Passing along, he saw a little girl three years old, making a stand, and refusing to move. Two ladies were trying in vain to prevail on her to go on. The gallant American crossed over to try his powers of persuasion, which were potent with children. One of the ladies, he perceived, was a countess he had met at court, and bowed to her. The other lady he did not recognize at all, nor in any way salute. Soon after, he met the Baroness De Stein, and told her that he had just seen one of the little princesses with the Countess De Peyster and a "*jolie fille de chambre*." It happened that the "jolie fille de chambre" was no less a personage than the Grand Duchess of Weimar, to whom Madame De Stein told the story. Colonel Burr, on meeting the duchess at dinner that evening, at the palace, was humorously rallied by her on his oversight. It is evident that Burr was in remarkably high favor in the courtly circles of Weimar.

But why was he there? It was not the fame of Goethe and Wieland, and the duke, that attracted Aaron Burr to Weimar; but an amour, a *serious* passion for a lady of rank. "Weimar, Weimar," he wrote, "for which I have gone seventy miles out of my way; have expended so much time and money; and all this for the lovely D'Or. I shall, at least, have the satisfaction of having performed my engagement, perhaps the only reward." Then, as the recent intelligence from Paris crosses his mind, he adds, "How little did I know how much I should regret the time!" The lady was a member of the court circle of Weimar. He was with her constantly there, and appears to have been no unwelcome cava-

lier. His passion grew as the days passed on, till he became so completely captivated, as to be tempted to abandon his long-cherished projects, and devote himself for ever to the object of his idolatry.

He saw his danger, and sought safety in a precipitate flight. He was engaged to dinners, to parties, to balls; but, without waiting even to send excuses or farewells, or to receive letters that had been promised him, he hurried away from the sphere of the "sorceress." "Another interview," wrote he to his daughter, "and I might have been lost; my hopes and projects blasted and abandoned. The horror of this last catastrophe struck me so forcibly, and the danger was so imminent, that at eight o'clock I ordered post-horses; gave a crown extra to the postillion to drive like the devil, and lo! here I am in a warm room, near a neat, good bed, safely locked within the walls of Erfurth, rejoicing and repining. If you had been near me, I should have had none of this trouble."

As he was writing the above sentences, an incident occurred which showed that the struggle through which he had passed had left him in no very amiable temper. "About one o'clock in the morning," he says, "an ill-looking fellow opened my door without knocking, and, muttering in German something which I did not comprehend, bid me put out my candle. Being in no very placid humor at the moment, as you see, I cursed him, and sent him to the lower regions, in French and English. He advanced, and was going to seize the candle. My umbrella, which has a dirk in the handle, being near me, I seized it, drew the dirk, and drove him out of the room. Some minutes after I heard the steps of a number of men, and, looking out of my window, saw it was a corporal's guard. It then occurred to me that this Erfurth, being a garrison town, with a French governor, there might, probably enough, be an order for extinguishing lights at a certain hour, and I had no doubt but the gentlemen I had just seen in the street were coming to invite me to take a walk with them. So I bundled up my papers, and put them in my pocket to be ready for a lodging in the guard-house. It was only the relief of the

sentinels going round; and who the impertinent extinguisher was I have not heard."

We find him next at Gotha, where he remained three or four days, and made an extraordinary impression upon the reigning family. The duke, in particular, himself a brilliant man, was charmed with the urbane and agreeable American. Burr almost lived at the palace. He spoke one evening of Theodosia, and chanced to mention that he had a portrait of her at his hotel. Nothing would content the duke but an immediate sight of the picture, and an usher was dispatched to bring it to the palace. The duke liked Theodosia, but not the portrait. "In the original," said he, "there must be dignity, majesty, genius, gentleness, and sensibility; all discernible in the picture, but imperfectly expressed." Burr, on his part, was charmed with the duke's daughter, the princess Louise, a lovely girl of ten years. Before leaving Gotha, he demanded a souvenir of the little princess. "What should it be?" she asked. He proposed a *garter*, which greatly amused the group. But she sent him a drawing of a bouquet, "executed wonderfully for her years." On examining it, he found no name or inscription to "verify the important transaction," and sent it back to have the omission supplied, which was very gracefully done by the little princess.*

* The following is the note in which Colonel Burr made the request:

"TO MADEMOISELLE LA BARONNE DE DALWIGK.

"I beg pardon, in the first place, for writing to you at all. In the next, for writing in English; but great exigencies defy the restraint of forms.

"I have received, with enthusiasm and delight, the elegant bouquet made by the beautiful hand of my lovely Princess Louisa; but I have searched in vain for a name, a date, an address, an inscription, something to denote the donor and the occasion. Alas! all is blank and silent. Allow me to intreat your influence with my adored princess to induce her to add her name and a date. The bouquet is sent for the purpose by the bearer of this, who will wait your orders.

"On another subject, interesting to yourself, be assured of my punctuality and zeal. It is with regret that I bid adieu to Gotha. I shall bear with me to my native forests the recollection of the charms and hospitalities of its court.

"A. BURR."

At Gotha, as everywhere else in Germany, he found people familiarly acquainted with his career; "duels, treasons, speeches, gallantries," to use his own language. The Baron Strick, for example, chamberlain to the King of Prussia, whom Burr met at the court of Gotha, had read his farewell speech to the Senate, and conceived for the speaker an admiration approaching the enthusiastic. No American, in a word, has had such success at the refined courts of Germany as Colonel Burr.

He remained a few days at Frankfort-on-the-Main, before entering the dominions of the emperor. Well supplied with introductions from his friends in Gotha and Weimar, he was at once at home in the court society of the city. At the Casino there occurred two or three ridiculous incidents.

"Who is that beautiful creature with the blanche bon?" asked Burr of a grand duke whom he knew.

"That, sir, is my daughter; shall I have the honor to present you?"

A few minutes after, his attention was attracted by another lady.

"Pray, count," said he to an acquaintance, "what fine, voluptuous woman was that you were just now talking with?"

"Who, the very tall one, with the bon rouge?"

"Exactly; a most striking figure."

"That, sir, is my wife. Ha! ha! Come here, my dear, Monsieur le Colonel Burr wishes to know you."

This, said he, was too much for one evening; and having two other engagements, he soon left. Returning later, he found the ladies promenading the floor, while the gentlemen were seated at cards. This struck him as being an odd arrangement of the company, and addressing a young lady, he said, "Is there any law forbidding a gentleman to walk with a lady?"

"O! nonsense; how could there be such a law?"

"Well, then, is it contrary to good manners?"

"By no means."

"May I then walk with you?"

"Certainly."

And so he did for an hour, though no gentleman dared follow his example.

From Frankfort he went to Mayence, where his Paris passports were to be sent. To his dismay, he found they had not arrived. He learned further, that his intention to visit Paris had been extremely ill-received by the American minister, and he was earnestly advised not to put his person into the power of the French authorities. He was not dissuaded, but began anew negotiations for the indispensable passports. Fearing a long delay, he withdrew from society, and went to reside in cheap lodgings, observing that ducats were of more value to him just then than dinners. To his inexpressible relief, however, the passports soon arrived, and on the 16th of February, 1810, he was in Paris.

CHAPTER XXX.

IN PARIS UNDER SURVEILLANCE.

Interview with the Duc de Cadore — Fruitless Attempts to Reach the Emperor — Letter to Fouché — The King of Westphalia — Passports Refused — Under Surveillance of the Police — Pecuniary Straits — Cut by the American Residents — Interview with the Duc de Rovigo — Correspondence with the American Charge des Affaires — Burr's Extreme Poverty — Cures a Smoky Chimney — Letters from Theodosia — Expedients for Raising Money.

Until Colonel Burr heard from Professor Heeren that Napoleon had consented to the independence of the Spanish provinces in America, he had no intention of attempting to reach the ear of the emperor. The news of that event changed him once more from a traveler into a politician, and though he could not break away immediately from the fascinations of German society, yet having once done so, he pursued his object with all his own intensity. It was his last hope.

The morning after his arrival in Paris he began operations by dispatching a note to the Duc de Cadore, Napoleon's minister for foreign affairs, hinting at his object in coming to Paris, and asking an interview. In the evening came a civil reply, appointing a day and hour for the purpose. At the appointed time, Colonel Burr went to the office of the minister, and applied for admission. But the porter, on referring to the list of persons to be that day received, found not the name of Burr, and refused to admit him. This was not a promising sign. The applicant, too, had neglected to bring the duc's note granting the audience. "*Fortunately*," says the diary, "the porter of the day was a woman," and "after much negotiation, got admission to the ante-chamber." He sent in his card and was received; had half an hour's conversation with the duc, in the course of which he gave him an outline of his

views and plans. How incapable the ministers of Napoleon were of independent action, how literally they were the *ministers* of their master's will, is known. The Duc de Cadore, on this occasion, could only listen politely to the statements of the applicant, and give an *official* promise to submit his projects to the consideration of the emperor. Colonel Burr was not elated by this interview, and, indeed, it had no result whatever.

He waited a few days, and then applied to other ministers, but received no answer. To less important officials he procured admittance, but met with no encouragement. He found, what so many adventurers had to discover during Napoleon's reign, that every avenue from the outer world to the emperor's cabinet, was beset with difficulties. The King of Westphalia, who had been superbly entertained at Richmond Hill in other days, was then in Paris, and Colonel Burr danced attendance in the ante-chambers of his hotel, in the hope of obtaining an audience. He wrote a memorial to the emperor himself, and gave it in charge to an official of the court to present. No response. On the ministers' "public days," he occasionally got the ear of one of them for a few minutes, and made, in some instances, a favorable impression; but nothing followed to give him hope.

Five weeks passed in these fruitless endeavors. He then addressed to the Duc d'Otrante (Fouché) the following letter:

"Mr. Burr, from the United States of North America, having some months ago seen published in the *Moniteur* the expression of his majesty's assent to the independence of the Spanish American colonies, came to Paris to offer his services to accomplish that object and others connected therewith. He asked neither men or money. He asked only the authorization of his majesty.

"Mr. Burr has had conversations with persons near the government, and through whom he had presumed that the communications would have passed to the emperor. Having received no answer, he proposes shortly to take his departure. But being persuaded that his communications have not been understood, and doubting whether they have at all been pre-

sented to his majesty, Mr. Burr should, with very great regret, leave the country without having had a few minutes' conversation with his excellency the Duke d'Otrante, for whose talents he has long entertained the highest veneration, and by whom Mr. Burr is convinced that the value of his views would be promptly and justly appreciated.

"He takes the liberty of asking an audience at any hour his excellency may be pleased to name, and begs leave to offer assurances of his profound consideration and respect."

The interview was granted. But the Duc d'Otrante could do no more for him than the Duc de Cadore.

The King of Westphalia being still in Paris, it occurred to Colonel Burr, that through him he could gain access to the emperor. After attempting again to procure an interview through the officers of his court, he wrote directly to the king himself: "Sire—I take the liberty of asking an interview with your majesty, as well to offer personally my homage as to make a communication, of the value of which your majesty will determine in a few minutes' conversation." He received for answer the information that the king was about to leave Paris for twenty days, and that nothing could be done until his return. It does not appear that the audience was ever granted.

It were useless to narrate all the efforts made by Colonel Burr to obtain consideration for his projects at the French court. He had small expectation of success after the first eight days of his stay in Paris; but it was not till he had spent five months of active exertion, without receiving from any source the slightest encouragement, that he finally abandoned all hope of accomplishing the object for which he had come to Europe. How indefatigably he attended the audience-chambers of ministers! What letters and memorials he wrote! How perfectly he maintained his dignity, in circumstances that made him a constant solicitor! If his task had been to gain over the ministers of Napoleon, his success would have been easy and speedy; and if he could have stood face to face with Napoleon for half an hour, he could not have failed to make an impression on a man who had a keen eye for discerning

executive force, and knew how to render it available for his own purposes. If the boy-soldier, Aaron Burr, had begun his career in the French service, and had stood as near to Napoleon as he did to Washington, the Great Soldier would have seen in the intrepid, impetuous lieutenant, the stuff to make a marshal of. Burr missed immortal glory by being born on the wrong continent.

The disappointed adventurer now determined, at all hazards, to return to the United States, and applied for the requisite passports. *They were refused!* No explanation was given him, except that he could go to any part of France he wished, but that his departure from the empire was positively forbidden. He was under the surveillance of that perfect police which could make the empire as impassable a prison as a walled and moated fortress. "Behold me," he cried, "a prisoner of state, and almost without a sous." Henceforward, for many a tedious month, his only serious occupation was to get out of France. "All this vexation," he thought, "arose from the machinations of our worthy minister, General Armstrong,* who has been, and still is, indefatigable in his exertions to my prejudice; goaded on by personal hatred, by political rancor, and by the natural malevolence of his temper."

His first care now was to provide the means of subsistence. He had intended to remain a month in Paris, and had come provided with money for that period. At first he had lived, as was necessary, in a tolerable hotel, and, for the sake of appearances, had kept a valet. Half a year of this mode of life, though he economized to the point of going without sugar (then a dollar a pound in Paris), had reduced his finances to the lowest ebb, and his situation was really serious. Winter was approaching, and there was no prospect either of his leaving the empire, or of being able to live in it. He was by no means friendless, however. The celebrated Count Volney he had known and entertained in America, and was

* Armstrong was an old New York politician, connected by marriage with the Livingstons, and now devoted to Jefferson. It was Armstrong, doubtless, that influenced Talleyrand (another of Burr's New York guests) against the exile.

now his frequent associate in Paris. With Mrs. Robertson, the widow of the Scotch historian, he was extremely intimate. He soon had a large circle of admiring friends in the upper ranks of the Bureaucracy, and was evidently regarded with a favorable eye by two or three of the Napoleonic dukes. But in his extreme need, it was to a countryman that he made known his circumstances, and applied for help.

Even at that early period, there was a considerable number of American residents in Paris, a city which was peculiarly dear to the men who could remember the Revolution as a recent event. Upon the arrival of Aaron Burr, the American residents entered into a combination against him. It was agreed that any American citizen who should converse with, speak to, or salute him, should be "cut" by all the rest; and that no captain of a vessel, or merchant, should convey any letter or parcel for him. The messenger to whom were entrusted dispatches from the American minister to the government at Washington, was instructed to take no letter or parcel from Aaron Burr, and to require every one handing him a letter or parcel, for delivery in the United States, to pledge his honor that it contained nothing from Aaron Burr.

In spite of these vindictive measures, he had friends and partisans among the Americans in Paris, one of whom was Edward Griswold, formerly a member of the New York bar, and now a speculating resident of Paris, and a man of fortune. To him, as the last louis was gliding from his purse, Colonel Burr frankly and fully revealed his situation, and asked a loan of a hundred and fifty guineas. The man of wealth was himself temporarily embarrassed, but contrived to advance about half that sum, which enabled Burr to exist during the winter.

But only to exist. He lived in the cheapest lodgings, and denied himself nearly every luxury. Frequent in his diary are such entries as this: "It is now so cold that I should be glad of a fire; but to that I have great objections; for what would become of the fifty plays, and something, I won't tell what, which I meditate to buy for Gampillo, that will make his little heart beat." Or this: "I never spend a livre that I do not calculate what pretty thing it might have bought for

you (Theodosia) and Gampillo." Or this: "I was near going to bed without writing to you, for it is very cold, and I have only two little stumps (of wood) about as big as your little fists. But then I thought you would so pout; so I mustered courage, and have wrote you all this, hussy." Or this: "I wear no surtout, for a great many philosophic reasons; principally, because I have not got one. The old great coat which I brought from America, still serves for traveling, if I should ever travel again." While he was thus shivering in his garret, one day, he read in an American paper that Aaron Burr had entered the service of the Emperor Napoleon, at a salary of two thousand pounds per annum; and, in an English paper that the same individual was engaged in a project for dismembering the United States!

It was not without many an effort that he yielded to the necessity of remaining in Paris. When, through the aid of Mr. Griswold, he had once more the means of returning to the United States, his exertions to obtain a passport were incessant. He wrote to ministers, inquiring the reason of his detention, and, receiving no answer, besieged their antechambers for interviews. One of his interviews with the Duc de Rovigo (Savary) is described at some length in the diary:

"At one to Duke Rovigo's. I was the first, and placed in the ante-chamber. The huissier told me that the audience would not begin till two. 'Why, then, sir, did you bid me come at one?' 'That you might be ready at two.' There came in to the number of forty-seven; a majority women. Two English women sat next to me. At half-past two the doors were thrown open, and a huissier cried out, 'Mesdames et messieurs, entrez.' I was quite surprised, expecting we were to be called in one by one, as I had seen practiced by Fauchet and Champigny. We all went in. The duke, in full dress, was at the further end of the room, and we stood, forming a sort of horse-shoe, of which the two ends approached him. He began on his right, and so on, hearing and answering, generally, in about one minute. Some of the women kept him three or four minutes, and some talking on after he had given his answer, till he had turned his back and ad-

dressed the next. His first question was, 'Qui etes vous?' One very ill-looking fellow he asked, 'Etes vous le Colonel Burr?' By which I learned that he had that person in his mind. I shifted my place so as to be last; but some three or four others, with the like design, got after me.

"At length my turn came. I announced myself, and told him I had been refused a passport, at which I was the more surprised, as he probably knew the nature of the business which had brought me to France.

"'I have heard it mentioned, but I do not know the details.'

"'I am delighted, sir, to have an opportunity to make you acquainted with them. I have not had an opportunity of being heard by a soldier, and no other is capable of judging of my enterprise. The military genius of your excellency will appreciate my views. I should be sorry, indeed, to leave France without having been listened to and understood.'

"He asked me to walk aside that he might hear it. I told him that I had it in writing.

"'Ah! give it me. I will read it with eagerness.'

"So I drew it from my side pocket and gave it to him, and was going to renew the question of passport.

"'Ah! we will talk of that after I shall have read your memorial. I will write and give you a private audience in a few days.' And then he suddenly turned off to another.

"So that, after all my pains to get an audience, it has amounted to just nothing. It was unlucky, however, that, through ignorance, I should have stumbled on his public day. On any other he gives private audience to all who are permitted to come in. I like much his appearance and manner. A handsome man, about forty-two, very prompt and decided, but sufficiently courteous. He has the appearance of intelligence and good breeding; all which is better than I had been taught to expect."

A few days after, he attended a grand reception at the palace of the Duc Rovigo, where he was presented in form by the Duc d'Alberg. The Duc de Rovigo had read the memorial, and "said some civil things," but no allusion was made

to the passport. Soon Burr was again in the official antechamber, and, though told by the usher that the duc did not receive that day, he waited three hours, and "got sight of his excellency by force and demanded the passport." The duc escaped his importunity, by asserting that the emperor had consented to his departure, and that he could obtain a passport by applying to the Minister for Foreign Affairs. But Burr knew the French government too well to believe him. "Words," said he, "cost nothing here, and there is often an immensity of time and space between the promise of a courtier and the performance." And there was in this instance. The duc's assurance was literally nothing but a means of escaping from an importunate suitor.

He addressed a memorial at last to the emperor himself, in which he told the story of his repeated failures to gain a hearing for his projects, and of his forced detention in Paris. "Not only," he concluded, "did the motives of my visit and my conduct since my residence in France deserve a different return; at all times I have deserved well of your majesty and of the French nation. My home in the United States has been always open to French citizens, and few of any note who have visited the United States have not experienced my hospitality. At a period when the administration of the government of the United States was hostile to France and Frenchmen, they received from me efficient protection. These, sire, are my crimes against France! Presuming that a proceeding so distressing and unmerited — so contrary to the laws of hospitality, to the fame of your majesty's magnanimity and justice, and to that of the courtesy of the French nation, must be without your majesty's knowledge, and that, amid the mighty concerns which weigh on your majesty's mind, those of an individual so humble as myself may have escaped your notice, I venture to intrude into your presence, and to ask either a passport to return to the United States, or, if in fact your majesty, with the expectation of rendering me useful to you, should wish a further delay, that I may be informed of the period of that delay, that I may take measures accordingly for my subsistence."

No answer was vouchsafed to this memorial, which may never have reached the emperor.

Before the winter set in, Colonel Burr brought himself to apply to the American minister for a certificate of citizenship, the possession of which, he erroneously supposed, would secure the consent of the French government to his departure. General Armstrong was absent, and had left in charge of the embassy Jonathan Russell, of Rhode Island. To him Colonel Burr formally applied. Russell replied, that "the province of granting passports to citizens of the United States belongs to the consul, to whom all wishing for that protection must apply." Colonel Burr applied to the consul;* who answered, that "his knowledge of the circumstances under which Mr. Burr left the United States rendered it his duty to decline giving Mr. Burr either a passport or a permis de séjour," but that "the chargé des affaires unquestionably possessed full authority to grant protection in either of those forms to any person to whom it might be improperly denied by the consul." Colonel Burr accordingly applied again to the chargé des affaires, transmitting the consul's note, and denying the right of a foreign minister to inquire into any "*circumstances*" other than those which tend to prove or disprove the claim to citizenship. But, continued Burr, "if Mr. Russell should be of a different opinion, Mr. Burr is ready to satisfy him that no circumstances exist which can, by any construction, in the slightest degree impair his rights as a citizen, and that the conclusions of the consul are founded in error, either in points of fact or of inference. Yet, conceiving that every citizen has a right to demand a certificate or passport, Mr. Burr is constrained to renew his application to Mr. Russell, to whom the consul has been pleased to refer the decision."

To this, Russell replied in the following words: "The man who evades the offended laws of his country, abandons, for the time, the right to their protection. This fugitive from justice, during his voluntary exile, has a claim to no other passport than one which shall enable him to surrender himself

* The consul was Mr. McRae, a lawyer of Richmond, who had figured at the trial as one of the counsel for the prosecution.

for trial for the offenses with which he stands charged. Such a passport Mr. Russell will furnish to Mr. Burr, but no other."

The correspondence here rested for some months, but Burr at length replied to Russell's letter with equal adroitness and effrontery. To complete this story, his retort may be inserted here: "Mr. Burr asks of the chargé des affaires a passport to return to the United States. To prevent a circuitous proceeding, Mr. Burr takes the liberty of recalling to Mr. Russell's recollection that the consul has declined to act in regard to Mr. Burr; that the question has been referred to Mr. Russell, *who has been pleased to decide that Mr. Burr is entitled to the passport above requested.* He now wishes to avail himself of this decision." The chargé could not refuse the passport. But that document was of no avail without the added sanction of the French government, which had still to be obtained.

We shall pass rapidly over the period of Colonel Burr's forced residence in Paris. It was fifteen months before he finally escaped from the country; during the greater part of which his attention was divided between efforts to obtain passports, and schemes to procure the means of living. He was all activity. His mind never stagnated. His spirits never sank. He read enormously; he visited numberless persons and places; and was on the alert at all times.

His extreme poverty he regarded always in the light of a joke. "How sedate and sage one is," he says, "with only three sous." And again: "I may as well tell you of my economy in this wine affair. Eating my bread and cheese, and seeing half a bottle of the twenty-five sous wine left, I thought it would be too extravagant to open a bottle of the good; so I tried my best to get down the bad, constantly thinking of the other, which was in sight, and trying to persuade myself to give Gamp. some of that; but no. I stuck to the bad, and got it all down. Then, to pay myself for this act of heroism, treated him to a large tumbler of the true Roussillon, and sallied forth to my marchand de vin to engage him to exchange the residue. You see I am of Santara's

opinion, that though a man may be a little the poorer for drinking good wine, yet he is, under its influence, much more able to bear poverty."

A stout-hearted, jovial boy, who had been captivated by Robinson Crusoe, and then cast away on an island, would, we may imagine, repeat with avidity the contrivances he had read of in his favorite book, and take all the hardships of his lot in the gay Crusoean spirit. Something in this way, Colonel Burr took his poverty. He played with it. He had a kind of pleasure in spending his very *last* sous, to see what would come of it. "Having left exactly sixteen sous," he tells his daughter, "I bought with them two plays for my present amusement, and then for yours. Came home with my two plays, and not a single sous. Have been ransacking everywhere to see if no little ten sous piece could be found. Not one. To make matters worse, I am out of cigars, but have a little black, vile tobacco, which serves me as substitute. Poor Julia (landlady) too, is exhausted, being in advance for me twenty or thirty francs." He speaks frequently of his maneuvers to avoid the cold. Once, the wind blew down his chimney with such force as to scatter the ashes all over the room. "After various experiments how to weather the gale, I at length discovered that I could exist by lying flat on the floor; for this purpose I laid a blanket; and reposing on my elbows, with a candle at my side, on the floor, have been reading L'Espion Anglois, translated from the English; extremely well written, and, thus prostrate, I have the honor to write you this. When I got up just now for pen and ink, I found myself almost buried in ashes and cinders. You would have thought I had laid a month at the foot of Mount Vesuvius."

His chimney, indeed, was a ceaseless source of annoyance. Paris chimneys were so generally bad, that it was one of the trades of the city to cure them of smoking. His smoky chimney, however, enabled him to make a signal display of ingenuity, and to give Parisians one of the first proofs ever afforded them of the value of a Yankee notion. He engaged a "fumisté" to work, under his own order, upon his insupportable chimney. Burr directed the laying of every brick; and the

astonished mason, as he put each one in its place, paused to remonstrate against the absurdity of the plan. He was certain it could not answer; he would not be responsible. "Monsieur, it is my affair!" was Burr's reply. The work was soon done, a fire was lighted, and all the inmates of the house watched the result with interest. It answered perfectly. "The fumisté gazed upon the fire with astonishment and admiration, and seemed to conceive for me a most profound respect."

But this was merely a private and domestic triumph. A few days after, he performed the same feat upon a larger scale. He tells the story in his hurried, graphic way: "To Madame Fenwick's in the character of *fumisté*. Every chimney in her house smokes sometimes, and most of them always. I was railing against the stupidity of the Parisians, and quoted this among other instances. She challenged me to cure the evil. Accepted; and she assigned for the trial of my American skill the worst in the house. It had been already in the hands of several scientific fumistés. Some applied their remedies at the top, and others at the bottom, but equally without effect. This morning was assigned for my experiment, and she gave me carte blanche. At half past eight I found the mason, the brick, and the mortar. We went to work. She, in the mean time, made me breakfast (coffee, blanc, and honey) in the adjoining room. She amusing herself at my folly. Several visitors called, and all came to see what was going forward. Satirical, but pleasant remarks were made. On my part there was no sort of reply. At length the work was finished. At eleven we made a large fire. The chimney drew to perfection. The doors and windows might be open or shut; nothing disturbed the draught. What added greatly to the merit of the result is, that the day was the most unfavorable. A vehement wind from a quarter that always had filled the house with smoke. 'Sir, if you will announce yourself as a fumisté you will make a fortune.'"

In this instance, as in the other, he built the fire-place on the principle with which Franklin had, twenty years before, made Americans familiar. Thenceforward, he boiled his potatoes

without blinding himself with smoke; and potatoes were his main-stay sometimes for weeks together.

The bitter ingredient in the exile's cup during his residence in Paris, was the interruption of correspondence with his daughter. Nearly a year passed without his receiving a letter from her. One packet of letters reached him twenty-three months after it had been sent. She, too, had to pass eleven anxious months without hearing from her father. Yet father, daughter, and "Gampillus" wrote by every ship that sailed. The times were troubled, navigation was as nearly as possible suspended, and the route between the interior of South Carolina and an obscure lodging in Paris, was very long and circuitous. Moreover, the arrival of a letter addressed to a person under surveillance, and its delivery into the hands of that unfortunate individual, were, and are, two very distinct events in Paris, the latter by no means necessarily following the former.

When, after long, long intervals, words from the hills of South Carolina did find their way to the exile's ear, they were not words of good cheer. The embargo and non-intercourse acts had paralyzed the industry of the United States. Theodosia said the country was in a dreadful state. Produce could scarcely be sold for any price, while clothing and groceries were dearer than ever. Her husband had "offered the two lower plantations for sale, but every body was trying to sell, and no one could buy. *Even Mari*" (her husband), she added, "condemns the present measures of government, and joins in the almost universal cry of free commerce or war." She was puzzled at her father's protracted stay in Paris. "I begin to think," she said, "that *Hannibal has got to Capua.*"

She had to tell him, too, of old friends, who, when she was last in New York, were doubtful whether it was "safe" to visit her; of men who wished her father well, but were afraid to speak of him where speaking would do him good; of one who owed, and had promised pecuniary supplies, and "published himself a villain." But, exclaims this incomparable daughter, "JOHN SWARTWOUT is true invariably, and nobly conspicuous as the sun. He retrieves the character of man."

Keenly Theodosia watched for indications that the nation was relenting toward her father. But such indications never appeared. The newspapers seldom mentioned his name, but to stigmatize it. Editors friendly to him, knew that to write in his defense would only be to share his odium, and politicians were equally aware that no supporter of Aaron Burr could hope to receive the smallest governmental favor. There is no country, perhaps, where it requires so much moral courage to defend an unpopular man, or opinion, as the United States. Among the letters of Theodosia, there is one to Albert Gallatin, asking whether, in case of her father's return to America, he thought the government would prosecute him again. The language of that letter is remarkable. It shows that in soliciting the opinion of a public man on the point proposed, she felt herself to be asking a prodigious favor. "Though convinced of your *firmness*," she says, "still with the utmost diffidence I venture to address you on a subject which it is almost *dangerous to mention*." And having made the request, she is still eloquent in apologizing for the vastness of the demand upon his courage, his candor, his liberality. "Recollect," she says, "what are my incitements. Recollect that I have seen my father dashed from the high rank he held in the minds of his countrymen, imprisoned, and forced into exile. Must he ever remain excommunicated from the participation of domestic enjoyments and the privileges of a citizen; aloof from his accustomed sphere, and singled out as a mark for the shafts of calumny? Why should he be thus proscribed and held up to execration? What benefit to the country can possibly accrue from the continuation of this system? Surely it must be evident to the worst enemies of my father, that no man, situated as he will be, could obtain any undue influence, if even he should desire it."

Mr. Gallatin's answer was not decisive, and she was not without fear that prosecution awaited her father if he should return. She told him, three months after the date of her letter to Gallatin, that she augured ill of government, because the newspapers most devoted to it endeavored to keep up feelings of irritation against him. Yet she thought the "ma-

jority of the citizens were not inimical," and she urged him vehemently to return. She advised him not to land in Charleston, but to go boldly, and at once to New York, where, if he was attacked, he would be "in the midst of the tenth legion." If he should go first to South Carolina, "which both their *hearts* would crave, the news of his arrival would reach New York long before him, and the fervency of surprise and delighted friendship would have time to cool;" cabals would be formed, and measures would be taken. She thought it better for his affairs to come to a crisis, than for him to live in constant view of threatened ruin. "*If the worst comes*," she added, "*I will leave every thing to suffer with you!*" She little thought that her spirited advice would find Hannibal a prisoner at Capua.

Theodosia devoted a part of the letter just quoted to Blennerhassett. She said that that individual had written to Mr. Alston, accusing him and Aaron Burr of "plans that never entered the heads of either," and threatening immediate exposure unless Mr. Alston would purchase his silence by the payment of thirty-five thousand dollars. Blennerhassett said he had the pamphlet already written, and its revelations would blast the character of Governor Alston for ever. "As to Mr. Burr," remarked the Irish gentleman, "I wish you to observe, that I long since ceased to consider reference to his honor, resources, or good faith, in any other light than as a scandal to any man offering it who is not sunk as low as himself." "To Mr. Alston, also," said Theodosia, "he used such language as a low-bred coward *may* use at a distance of many hundred miles." She added that her husband had not deigned to notice the "audacious swindling trick."

Colonel Burr made many endeavors in Paris to improve his finances. At one time we see him absorbed in a speculation, in the shares of the Holland Company, in which he embarked all his slender capital. For many days he was on the rack of anxiety, but he eventually gained a few hundred dollars by the venture. If he could have obtained a passport to Amsterdam, he thought he could have cleared ten thousand dollars in a few weeks, by a more extensive operation of the same

kind. His spirits rose at the prospect. "I will send you," he said, to Theodosia, "a million of francs within six months," and then with merry exultation, adds, "but one half of it must be laid out in pretty things. O! what beautiful things I will send you. Gampillus, too, must have a beautiful little watch, and at least fifty trumpets of different sorts and sizes. Home at ten, and have been casting up my millions and spending it. Lord, how many people I have made happy!"

Dreams all. He tried in vain to get the passport. He then intrusted the scheme to a friend, who was to act for him in Holland, and share the proceeds of the speculation. That friend betrayed him, and nothing that occurred to Colonel Burr during all the years of his exile touched him so nearly as that. "My dear Theodosia," he wrote on the day of the discovery, "I am sick at heart, having made the most afflicting of all discoveries, the perfidy of a friend. A few days ago, a slight suspicion rested in my mind, but I rejected it as unworthy of him and unworthy of me. It is confirmed with every circumstance of aggravation. I had confided to him my speculation with unqualified frankness; disclosed every circumstance — things known to me alone. I had built on it the hopes of fortune. He pledged solemnly his honor to speak of it to no one without my leave. Not to take a step but in concurrence with me, on terms we had agreed. He went, I believe the same day, disclosed the whole, and associated himself with another to take it wholly from me. The object is irrevocably lost; for, even if he should repent, he can not take back his communications. This man first sought me under very peculiar circumstances; such as denoted generosity of sentiment, sensibility, and independence of mind." This is more like a burst of emotion than any other passage in the diary.

Once, in Paris, he had serious thoughts of translating a book from English into French for a bookseller. The work was in two volumes, octavo, for the translation of which he was to receive one hundred louis; he thought he could do it in *three months*, which, he said, was better than starving. The most singular circumstance of this scheme was, that the work

contained, to use his own words, "a quantity of abuse and libel on A. Burr." The work was probably "Lambert's Travels in North America," upon reading which, Burr had made the following entry in his journal: "To give the character of A. Burr, he copies part of Wirt's speech on the trial at Richmond." It is needless to say the project of translating was not carried into execution. But he was the man to have translated all the "abuse and libels" with literal fidelity, and without adding a note of denial or qualification.

At other times, we see him hurrying about Paris investigating a new mode of extracting vinegar from wood, or going to see a new plan of raising water, which he said he should use in supplying Charleston with that element, or inspecting the process of making and inserting artificial teeth, or trying experiments in the roasting of coffee, or rushing from official to official for tickets of admission to galleries and reviews.

He gave Theodosia a ludicrous account of the delights of walking in the streets of Paris at that time. "No sidewalks. The carts, cabrioles, and carriages of all sorts run up to the very houses. You must save yourself by bracing flat against the wall, there being, in most places, stones set up against the houses to keep the carts from injuring them. Most of the streets are paved as Albany and New York were before the Revolution, with an open gutter in the middle. Some arched in the middle, and a little gutter each side, very near the houses. It is fine sport for the cabriole and hack drivers to run a wheel in one of these gutters, always full of filth, and bespatter fifty pedestrians who are braced against the wall. The gutters or conduits for the water from the eves of the houses are carried out a few feet from the roofs, and thus discharge the rain-water over your head. In most places there are no such pipes, and then you have the benefit of the water from the eaves. This was a great ridicule against the city of Albany about twenty years ago; but Albany has reformed the evil."

The last few months of his stay in Paris he was put to all those shifts for eking out the means of subsistence which gentlemen in difficulties are wont to employ. He borrowed when he could, and pawned when he could not. Into Gampillus's

collection of coins, he made sad inroads. Sometimes he sold a parcel of books. Often he was penniless, and in debt to every body.

But all things have an end. Colonel Burr, at length, made his escape from Paris. A detail of the events which led to his deliverance will give the reader a momentary glimpse of the state of things in France under Napoleon the First.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HE ESCAPES.

THE TICKET ADVENTURE — ACQUAINTANCE WITH M. DENON AND THE DUC DE BASSANO — A BRIGHTER PROSPECT — PASSPORTS PROCURED — BASSANO'S GENEROSITY — JOURNEY TO HOLLAND — FURTHER DELAYS — LEAVES PARIS FOR EVER — INCIDENTS OF HIS DEPARTURE — SAILS FROM HOLLAND — CAPTURED BY A BRITISH FRIGATE — IN LONDON AGAIN — PENNILESS — CHEERFULNESS IN MISFORTUNE — DESPERATE EFFORTS TO RAISE MONEY — LEAVES LONDON — CHASE AFTER THE SHIP — SAILS FOR BOSTON.

THE Baron Denon, who accompanied Bonaparte to Egypt, and wrote the celebrated book upon that expedition, was Director of the Fine Arts during the reign of Napoleon. He enjoyed, but never *used* the confidence of the emperor; as Napoleon himself testified at St. Helena. With the ministers of the emperor he had influence, particularly with the Duc de Bassano (Maret), the Minister for Foreign Relations, who also began his career as a literary man. When Colonel Burr was in Paris, Baron Denon's house was a resort for the rank, learning, and celebrity of the French metropolis.

It was an act of gallantry that led Burr to an acquaintance with this gentleman. A certain Madame St. Claire, whom Burr extremely wished to gratify, asked him to procure for her a ticket of admission to the Louvre. Among Burr's intimate friends in Paris was the Duchess d'Alberg, wife of the Grand Duke of Frankfort, to whom he had brought letters from the Grand Duke of Gotha. From the duchess Colonel Burr readily enough obtained the promise of the desired ticket; but on going to receive it, found that she had neglected to procure one. The duke then gave him a note to the Director of the Fine Arts, the source of tickets to all the imperial galleries. M. Denon received him graciously, and on be-

ing complimented by Burr upon his book, became more gracious, and gave him a ticket for two persons.

Burr was rushing eagerly away to Madame St. Claire, "sure of a very kind reception," when he met Mr. Griswold, who said to him: "Sir, I am in the most distressing dilemma. A lady, whom I wish very much to oblige, asked me to procure her a ticket for the Louvre, and I promised to do it, but have been totally disappointed, and dare not see the lady's face; can you put me in the way to extricate myself?"

"*Voila!*" exclaimed Burr, producing the ticket, and giving it to Griswold, who went on his way rejoicing, not suspecting that he had only bestowed the "most distressing dilemma" upon his friend. That day Burr did not venture into the presence of the defrauded St. Claire; and when he saw her on the day following, she was in a humor which nothing but a ticket to the Louvre could appease. Away went Burr again to the Baron Denon for another ticket; and this was the most fortunate of all his many visits to persons of note in Paris. His fortunes were at the lowest ebb. He had not one sous in the world. The day before, he had had to make a considerable detour to avoid passing a place where sat a woman to whom he owed two sous for a cigar.

He found a dozen persons in M. Denon's hall of audience, and the great man had not yet appeared. "I doubted," says Colonel Burr, "whether he would recollect my name or person. On entering, he passed by the rest, sought me out, took me by the hand, and led me into his cabinet, and asked me to excuse him a few minutes till he should dismiss the persons in waiting. Gamp was justly surprised at a reception so unusual. On his return, he took my hand again with both his, assured me of the pleasure he had in meeting me, and his desire to be useful unto me. I took him at his word; told him the business which had brought me to France; the memoir I had presented, and the ill success; that is, the silence; and that my wishes were now confined to a passport. He offered to speak of my memoir to M. Maret (le Duc de Bassano), supposed to be the most intimate counselor of the emperor, and begged me to permit him to peruse my memoir. Agreed;

to-morrow morning, at ten, appointed for the purpose. Got my ticket and came off in triumph, that I could now fulfill my engagement to St. Claire."

These professions of regard were sincere, those promises were performed, and M. Denon continued his good offices till they had accomplished Colonel Burr's release.

A few days after, Burr and the Duc de Bassano were brought together at the house of M. Denon. The occasion was one of those grand breakfasts, which were fashionable at that time in Paris. The duc had evidently been prepossessed in favor of Burr, and on sitting down at the table (at half-past three in the afternoon) invited him to a seat next his own, the duchess and other ladies sitting opposite. Colonel Burr and the duc conversed much together during the repast; and, before they separated, the exile had told his story, and awakened in the minister a real interest in his fortunes. They talked much of Mexico. Burr said, "*it was not yet too late;*" but if Mexico were out of the question, he had but one favor to ask, permission to leave the empire. On leaving the saloon, the duc showed Colonel Burr very particular marks of favor, and "hoped he should have the honor soon to meet him again." From that day, he had a powerful friend at court, and the prospect of a return, one day, to his own country began to brighten.

Three months more of ante-chamber life elapsed before any thing decisive was done. M. Denon was zealous, Bassano was interested, Burr was importunate; but the emperor, then fondly anticipating the birth of the King of Rome, was, perhaps, not easily induced to attend to business of small importance to himself. At last, however, not far from the very birth-day of the imperial infant, Colonel Burr received, with unbounded delight, the official assurance that "his majesty had consented to his departure!" The Duc de Bassano, learning through M. Denon that Burr, in consequence of his long detention, was penniless and in debt, made the emperor's permission available, by lending him ten thousand francs.

One would suppose that his troubles were now over, and that nothing remained but to pay his debts, say good-by to

his friends, take passage in the diligence to the nearest seaport, and sail in the first ship to New York. Doubtless he thought so himself. But never were reasonable anticipations more tantalizingly disappointed.

The passport wrung from the reluctant Russell was, as we have seen, of no avail until it had received the authorization of the French authorities, to obtain which it had to pass through three offices. Through the first, the document passed quickly enough, and was duly transmitted to the second, where it remained immovable for fourteen days. At the end of that period, Burr received a paper certifying, in the usual form, that the passport had passed the second office, and had been sent to the third. To the third he forthwith repaired, and, on applying for the passport, was handed an officially-written declaration that it had not been received. In inquiring from office to office for the missing passport, he spent *five weeks*, without getting any tidings of it whatever. He was then told that it was probably lost, and that the only thing to be done was to get another passport, and begin again. He did so. Contemplating now a delay of six weeks, and being still haunted with visions of wealth from the Holland Company, he resolved to improve the time by going to Holland. That country having been recently made an integral part of the French empire, there was no difficulty in his obtaining a passport for the journey.

He went to Holland, and invested seven thousand francs in Holland Company shares, with what result does not appear. He also endeavored to get access to the directors of the company, and to lay certain plans before them for the enhancement of its prosperity. The answer he received was, that the directors of the Holland Company would "hold no conference, nor have any intercourse with A. Burr;" a fact which he records in his diary without remark.

After spending a few days in Amsterdam, he made a rapid tour of the country, and, returning, had a very agreeable adventure. An American ship had been recently brought in, the *Vigilant*, Captain Combes, and was threatened with long detention, if not confiscation. On Burr's first visit to Amster-

dam, he had met Captain Combes, and heard the story of his misfortunes — but, on his return, he found the captain exulting over a permit to sail, and eager for Colonel Burr to return in his ship to America. He expressed an unbounded regard for Burr, said he had laid awake whole nights thinking of him; promised to fit up a cabin on any plan he might prefer, and declared that nothing would please him more than to serve him. The ship was a stanch and new one, of four hundred tons, and Burr accepted the captain's offer. Back he flew to Paris to get his passport, and complete his business there.

He found the passport just where he had left it. But now a new difficulty arose. The passport given him by Russell was made out for Bordeaux, from which port he had intended to sail. He now returned the document to the chargé, and requested him to change the port of departure to Amsterdam, stating his reasons, and informing him that there was no likelihood of a ship sailing from Bordeaux for many months. That obliging individual refused, point blank, to make the alteration.

This was, for a moment, a crushing disappointment, as in those days an "opportunity for America" from a port under control of the French emperor, was a very rare event, and the day named for the sailing of the *Vigilant* was close at hand. Burr consulted Baron Denon, who promptly informed the Duc de Bassano of the new dilemma. The duc, who was now very warmly interested for Burr, chanced to possess a piece of information respecting Russell, which enabled him to bring to bear upon his virtuous mind a controlling influence. The duc told M. Denon that there was a *person* through whom he could reach Mr. Russell, but that *she* was at the moment out of town. The duc wrote to the lady. She returned to Paris instantly, and, on the very day of her return, the duc received the passport. The next day Burr received it, with all the requisite official signatures, and on the day following, July 20th, 1811, he left Paris for ever.

This last difficulty had detained him a month in Paris, during which he saw the fêtes and reviews that accompanied the christening of the King of Rome.

One incident of his departure tempts us to linger for a moment. He received a note from a lady inclosing a parting present of a metallic pen, a novelty at that time. "May it be instrumental," she wrote, "in showing to posterity how much you have been the victim of the envy and injustice of your countrymen." His reply, in the style of the last century, when fine gentlemen were all adoration to fine ladies, is a good instance of the mode. "It is quite impossible for me, madame," he began, "to express, in a language of which I am ignorant, how much I was surprised and flattered by your charming little note, and the pen which accompanied it. Could I write the French like a Parisian, it would even then be equally difficult. I have read and re-read the note at least twenty times, and examined the pen. This was my amusement for one long day, which still appeared short. The next day, having to write to the minister, I determined to test the inspiration of this pen. At first I had much difficulty in persuading myself to use it, it was so beautiful, so brilliant. At last I filled it with ink, and sat myself down to write; but all my ideas (if I had any) were wandering. I could think but of you. Having in vain ransacked my brains for half an hour, I gave up the business for the time. The same result followed the second attempt. I have come to the conclusion, therefore, that the pen ought to be consecrated to friendship and sentiment, and never should be sullied by appropriating it to matters of business. The most interesting service in which it ever will be employed will be to express to you the devotedness with which I am your friend."

He went to Amsterdam, where a new obstacle to his departure presented itself. The long detention of the ship had run Captain Combes so deeply in debt that he could not leave without raising a considerable sum of money. Burr was his only resource, out of all the fifty passengers that were going in the ship; and Burr himself had not a third of the money. But he contrived to procure the necessary sum; and he tells Theodosia, in a very touching manner, how he procured it. "But how did I raise it? The reply contains a dreadful disclosure. I raised it by the sale of my little 'meubles' and

loose property. Among others, alas! my dear little Gamp's; it is shocking to relate, but what could I do? The captain said it was impossible to get out of town without five hundred guilders. He had tried every resource, and was in despair. The money must be raised, or the voyage given up. So, after turning it over, and looking at it, and opening it, and putting it to my ear like a baby, and kissing it, and begging you a thousand pardons out loud, your dear, little, beautiful watch was — was sold. I do assure you — but you know how sorry I was. If my clothes had been salable, they would have gone first, that's sure. But, heighho! when I get rich I will buy you a prettier one."

He now went to Helder, the port where the ship lay, and took up his quarters on board. He exulted at the prospect of departure. "I feel," he said, "as if I was already on the way and my heart beats with joy. Yet, alas! the country which I am so anxious to revisit will, perhaps, reject me with horror. * * * My windows look over the ocean; that ocean which separates me from all that is dear. With what pleasure I did greet it after three years' absence. I am never weary of looking at it. There seems to be no obstacle between us, and I almost fancy I see you and Gampy with the sheep about the door, and he 'driving the great ram with a little stick.'"

There were still some days of agonizing detention. But about the 1st of October, 1811, the *Vigilant* sailed, and Aaron Burr looked for the last time on the continent of Europe. Between the time when he received the emperor's permission to go and the time of his actual departure from his majesty's dominions, six months elapsed — six months of scarcely remitted exertion directed to the sole object of getting away.

That he should think ill of continental Europe, and, particularly, of the Napoleonic government, was but natural. "It is a melancholy fact, my friend," he wrote soon after to Lord Balgray, "that Europe is fast, very fast, rebarbarizing; retrograding with rapid strides to the darkest ages of intellectual and moral degradation; all that has been seen, or felt, or heard, or read of despotism; all other, past and present, is faint and feeble; it is freedom and ease compared with that which now

desolates Europe. *The science of tyranny was in its infancy; it is now matured.* Within the last fifteen years, greater ravages have been made on the dignity, the worth, and the rational enjoyments of human nature, than in any former ten centuries. All the efforts of genius, all the nobler sentiments and finer feelings, are depressed and paralyzed. Private faith, personal confidence, and the whole train of social virtues, are condemned and eradicated. They are crimes. And you, my friend, even you, with all your generous propensities, your chivalrous notions of honor, and faith, and delicacy, were you condemned to live within the grasp of the tyrant, even you would discard them all, or you would be sacrificed as a dangerous subject."

What a cruel disappointment now awaited him! Before the ship sailed, he had been haunted by a vague fear that something might still happen to prevent the voyage; nor was it entirely without apprehension that he had observed from his cabin windows, British men-of-war cruising off the harbor. But the captain was confident of being allowed to pass, and Burr's fears subsided. But no sooner had the *Vigilant* put to sea than she was boarded by a British frigate. Officers and men came on board, and the ship was taken to Yarmouth, there to abide the decision of the admiralty, whether she should be condemned as a prize, or permitted to resume her voyage. Thus, after all his labor, anxiety, and expenditure, Burr found himself again on the coast whence he had been driven more than two years before.

With characteristic audacity, he wrote forthwith to the superintendent of the alien office for permission to land and to go to London. He stated the cause of his presence at Yarmouth, and described himself as being "on board a small ship, very badly accommodated, with fifty-four passengers, of whom a majority were women and children, thirty-one sailors, thirty-three boys, and about one hundred other quadrupeds and bipeds." To his surprise, as well as delight, he promptly received the desired permission; and, what was still less to have been expected, he alone, of passengers and crew, was allowed to leave the ship. To London he went, where he received from Bentham, and his other London friends, a joyful and

affectionate welcome. As there seemed no near prospect, nor any certainty whatever, of the *Vigilant's* release, after waiting some weeks, he removed his effects from her, and was once more established as a resident in London. The ship was afterward released, but her destination was changed to New Orleans, where Colonel Burr had no wish to appear. He lost his passage money, and had no resource but the very scanty remains of the Duc de Bassano's loan, and the property that had survived the many *sans-sous* periods of his residence in Paris. For a short time, however, he was the guest of Jeremy Bentham, but soon resumed, in lodgings of his own, the character of a gentleman in difficulties.

Now followed a struggle with misfortune that would have been terrible to any man in the world but Aaron Burr. To him it was not terrible in the least.

It was soon apparent that a passage to America had become an affair of extreme difficulty. Few ships ventured to sail; and not every captain would have Aaron Burr for a passenger. In ships bound for New Orleans, he thought it undesirable to go. One or two "opportunities" for northern ports, he lost by accident. Twenty others slipped by because he had not the money to improve them. And thus it happened that he was detained in London nearly half a year.

One by one, the few articles of value which he possessed, his books, his watch, the few presents he had saved for his daughter and her boy, were pawned or sold. It soon became a fight for *mere* existence. He removed to furnished lodgings in Clerkenwell Close, "at eight shillings a week;" only the Godwins and one American friend being admitted to the secret. The weekly problem was, how to pay the rent, and lay in the week's stock of provisions and fuel. Scores of such entries as the following occur in the diary of this period:

"On my way home discovered that I must dine. I find my appetite in the inverse ratio to my purse; and I now conceive why the poor eat so much when they can get it. Considering the state of my finances, resolved to lay out the whole instantly in necessaries, lest some folly or some beggar should rob me of a shilling. Bought, viz., half a pound of beef,

eightpence; a quarter of a pound of ham, sixpence; one pound of brown sugar, eightpence; two pounds of bread, eightpence; ten pounds of potatoes, fivepence; having left elevenpence, treated myself to a pot of ale, eightpence; and now, with threepence in my purse, have read the second volume of Ida. My beef was boiled — so bought, I mean, and I cooked my potatoes in my room. Made a great dinner. Ate at least one half of my beef. Of two great necessaries, coffee and tobacco, I have at least a week's allowance; so that, without a penny, I can keep the animal machine agoing for eight days."

Occasionally, we see him taking a chop at the "Hole in the Wall." Once he speaks of the *gentlemen* being shown into the parlor of a tavern, while he and other impecunious individuals were regaled with cold beef and pickles in the kitchen. At another time, he wrote: "Have left in cash two half-pence, which is much better than *one* penny, because they jingle, and thus one may refresh one's self with the music." Sometimes he could not write to Theodosia, because he had not "four and sixpence" to pay the postage. Often, he had nothing to eat but potatoes or bread. Once, he bought a pound of rice, and told Theodosia how "*it grieved him to find rice retailed at fourpence.*" How little he could have anticipated, on Theodosia's brilliant wedding-day, that he should ever contemplate her husband's rice plantations from *such* a point of view!

He was all activity in London, and tried many a curious expedient for getting money. In Paris he had had made a set of artificial teeth by the most celebrated dentist in Europe. He observed the process closely, became very intimate with the operator, brought with him to London a thousand of his teeth, and, in his extremity there, attempted to sell both the teeth and his own knowledge of the art of inserting them. But he found that the London dentists were not inferior to the French, and that they regarded the French teeth with contempt. Another of his projects was to test in England the process he had heard of in France, of making vinegar out of the sap of wood. He happened to mention the subject one

day to Brunel, the celebrated engineer, who was at once struck with the idea, and offered to engage with Burr in the experiment for their joint benefit. Down to Yarmouth rushed Burr instantly, to get a pamphlet on the subject which he had left on board the ship. It was lost. Not dismayed, he pushed his inquiries for some weeks, but never succeeded in making practicable vinegar.

He had a dream, too, of making a grand improvement in the steamboat, which, on his last visit to New York, he had seen navigating the Hudson at the rate of five miles an hour. It was a rage then to invent improvements in the steamboat. Burr's idea gave him no peace for several days. "Ruminating," he says, "after going to bed on the state of the treasury, the thing came up again, and engrossed me for at least three hours. I found it perfect; applied it to sea-vessels, to ships of war; in short, to every thing that floats. Sails, and masts, and rigging, and the whole science of seamanship, are become useless. My vessels go at the rate of twenty miles an hour, and am in hopes to bring them to thirty. From Charleston to New York will be a certain passage of thirty hours; from New York to London, of six days; but to tell half I did would fill a quire of paper." He could think of nothing else. He saw himself a millionaire, succoring distressed friends in London, bestowing fortunes upon "the faithful in the United States," and raining beautiful presents upon Gampillo. But, unfortunately, as he was walking one day in London, thinking out the details of his invention, suddenly an objection occurred to him. "It struck me," he says, "like electricity: my poor vessels lay motionless. It was just opposite Somerset House; I stopped short, and began to sacré and diable till awakened by the bustle of the passing crowd. The subject then lay pretty quiet till last night; during my vigils I found a complete remedy, and now away we go again. An experiment shall be made, very privately, however, and, if it fail, there shall be no one but you to laugh at me." As the Atlantic has not yet been crossed in six days, it may be presumed that the experiment did fail.

Another subject greatly interested him about the same

time. It was the Lancasterian method of instruction, which was just then coming into vogue in London. He visited the schools conducted on that system, and was delighted with what he saw. He also bought Lancaster's book, and sent it, with warm commendations, to his daughter.

Nor was Mexico forgotten; he never forgot it, while he had breath. But the English government, though it now exhibited no unfriendliness toward him, and, indeed, conceded to him every personal favor that he solicited, yet never showed the slightest interest in his plans, nor any wish to avail itself of his knowledge of Spanish American affairs.

As the spring of 1812 advanced, his desire to get to the United States became vehement. He began to believe that war between England and the United States was now, in spite of the reluctance of the American cabinet, a possible event, and it was very evident that he must get home before hostilities commenced, or be detained in Europe, perhaps, for many years. In the beginning of March he fell in, in the course of his ship-hunting, with one Captain Potter, of the ship *Aurora*, who offered to take him to Boston for thirty pounds, to keep the secret of his name, and to defy the wrath of the American consul, who had already dissuaded more than one captain from receiving Colonel Burr as a passenger. He determined to go, and, though nearly penniless, proceeded with his preparations for the voyage with the utmost confidence. But desperate was the struggle to get the money. Nearly every article he possessed that could be sold for money, was sold. Then he borrowed of the few friends with whom he was on terms that admitted of his asking such a favor. Bentham, alas! had himself fallen into difficulties, and was threatened by an illiberal government with a ruinous prosecution.

One ten pound note, he got in an unexpected and not quite pleasant manner. He was with Mr. Reeves, the superintendent of the alien office, and it occurred to him to offer Reeves his copy of Bayle's dictionary for ten pounds. Reeves asked why he wished to sell it. "I want the money," said Burr. Reeves agreed to buy the book, placed ten pounds in Burr's hands, and said, "You had better keep your Bayle, and send

me the ten pounds when you please." "The thing was so sudden," wrote Burr, "that I was not prepared to say any thing."

But he had not money enough yet. His fair friends were, as ever, active in his behalf. One of them ran about London all one day offering for sale a ring and watch of his. But her report was that the town was full of watches and bijouterie in the hands of distressed French and German nobles, and no jeweler would look at such things.

Every resource had failed. He resolved now upon what he called "a desperate and humiliating expedient." "I went," he said, "direct to Reeves, and told him that the ship was gone to Gravesend, and that I must lose my passage unless I could have twenty pounds. Without a word of reply, he drew a check on his banker for twenty pounds; and how I did gallop across the park to the said banker's to get my twenty pounds." His last regret was, that certain presents which he had long kept for Theodosia and her son, he could not redeem from pawn.

And now he was really going. His preparations were completed; his passage was secured; the ship was to sail to-morrow. At midnight, he wrote in his diary as follows: "And now, at twelve, having packed up my little residue of duds into that same unfortunate white sack, and stowed my scattered papers into my writing-case, I repose, smoking my pipe, and contemplating the certainty of *escaping* from this country, the certainty of seeing you. Those are my only pleasing anticipations. For as to my reception in my own country, so far as depends on the government, if I may judge from the conduct of their agents in every part of Europe, I ought to expect all the efforts of the most implacable malice. This, however, does not give me a moment's uneasiness. I feel myself able to meet and repel them. My private debts are a subject of some little solicitude; but a confidence in my own industry and resources does not permit me to despond, nor even to doubt. If there be nothing better to be done, I shall set about making money in every lawful and honorable way. But again, as to political persecution. The incapacity, for every purpose

of public administration, of our present rulers, and their total want of energy and firmness, is such, that it is impossible that such feeble and corrupt materials can long hold together, or maintain themselves in power or influence. Already there are symptoms of rapid and approaching decay and dissolution. Tell M. (Mr. Alston) to preserve his State influence, and not again degrade himself by compromising with rascals and cowards. My great and only real anxiety is for your health. If your constitution should be ruined, and you become the victim of disease, I shall have no attachment to life or motive to exertion."

The next morning at eight, he was at the office of the Gravesend coaches, where a few friends met him to say farewell. Gravesend, where the ship lay, and whence she was to sail *at noon*, is twenty miles from London. To the horror of the whole party, it was found that the morning coach had gone! The hours of departure had been recently changed. There was no other public conveyance of any kind till one o'clock. What was to be done? A friend suggested a post-chaise, but that would cost three guineas, and Burr had not a quarter of that sum. The same friend offered to lend the money "But," says Burr, "he is so poor, and having a wife and two children, that I could not in conscience take it, especially as Graves said the wind was ahead, and the ship could not possibly stir." So he waited for the one o'clock coach.

He reached Gravesend at five in the afternoon. The ship had started at noon, and was now five hours on her way down the river!

There was not a moment to be lost. He ran to the alien office to get his passport completed; for passports were then necessary for foreigners leaving England. The office was shut! He hunted up the clerk, got his signature to the passport, and hurried to the custom-house for an officer to examine his sack and writing-desk. That done, he hastened to the river to engage a boatman to row after the ship and put him on board. Not a boatman would stir under four guineas; as on such occasions, they combined to extort from a desperate voyager an enormous fee. Burr had not a single guinea! In this extremity,

he found a boatman not in the plot to extort, who offered to put him on board for one guinea, provided he overtook the ship within twelve miles; if not, for two guineas. Burr had an acquaintance with him at Gravesend, who consented to cash an order for three guineas on his poor friend in London whose offer of a loan Burr had so considerately refused in the morning. His purse thus replenished, he embarked, just as the sun was setting, in a small skiff, rowed by two men, for a chase after the ship.

It was a cold evening in March. Burr, with no overcoat, was chilled to the bone, as the boat shot down the river in the wind's teeth. When the twelve miles were passed, he was told that the ship was ten miles further. By this time he was so benumbed with cold that he could neither stand nor move; and he induced the boatmen, by a promise of some grog, to stop at a little tavern by the river side for him to warm himself. He had to be lifted out of the boat; but a good fire and a cup of tea soon restored him, and they again embarked. This time he was perfectly comfortable, as he bought a bundle of straw and placed it in the boat for a bed, and the boatmen lent him their overcoats for a covering. In five minutes he was *fast asleep*, and remained unconscious of any thing till midnight, when the boatmen woke him to announce the delightful fact that they were alongside the *Aurora*. They had rowed twenty-seven miles, and demanded three guineas for their labor. He paid it, and went on board the ship without one penny. The captain got up to receive him; they sat talking for an hour, and then Colonel Burr, refreshed by his three hours' sleep on board the boat, went to his cabin and wrote an account in his journal of the day's thrilling adventures.

"I hope," he concluded, "never to visit England again, unless at the head of fifty thousand men. I shake the dust off my feet; adieu, John Bull. Insula inhospitabilis, as it was truly called eighteen hundred years ago." Men must be allowed to speak of the market according to the demand in it for their own wares.

He found the captain and passengers alarmed lest war should be declared before they reached Boston, and thus the ship be

exposed to capture. "But," said Burr, "I have no such apprehensions. I believe that our present administration will not declare war. If the British should hang or roast every American they can catch, and seize all their property, no war would be declared by the United States under present rulers. When Porter's war resolutions first came, I considered them mere empty, unmeaning wind; and that all the subsequent measures are merely to keep up the spirits and coherence of the party till the elections should be over; those elections for State legislatures which will decide the next presidential election. But J. Madison & Co. began this game too soon, and I doubt whether all the tricks they can play off will keep up the farce till the month of May. I treat their war-prattle as I should that of a bevy of boarding-school misses who should talk of making war; show them a bayonet or a sword, and they run and hide. Now, at some future day, we will read this over, and see whether I know those folks. I did not dare write any such things while on shore, for I never felt perfectly secure against another seizure."

Just sixty-three days after this confident prophecy was written, namely, on the 18th of May, 1812, war was declared. But, by that time, the good ship *Aurora* was safe in Boston harbor.

Colonel Burr sailed under the name of *Arnot*, for the assumption of which he had the express permission of the authorities of the British alien office. The captain kept his secret. "Mr. Arnot," wrote Burr, "is a grave, silent, strange sort of animal, insomuch that we know not what to make of him." May 4th, he wrote: "A pilot is in sight, and within two miles of us. All is bustle and joy, except Gamp. Why should he rejoice?"

That afternoon, after a passage of five weeks, the *Aurora* was made fast to one of the Boston wharfs. Every passenger but one went immediately on shore. The captain and mate also left the ship in the course of the afternoon.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE EXILE'S WELCOME HOME.

Alone in the Ship — Goes on Shore in Disguise — Adventures at the Custom-House — Detention in Boston — Interview with the Old Soldier — The College Classmate — Recognized by a Lady — Good News from Swartwout — Sails in a Sloop for New York — Finds Relatives on Board — Startling Incident — Burr Narrates his Arrival in the City — Concealed for Twenty Days — Announcement of his Arrival — Successful Beginning of Business — Dreadful News from Theodosia — Death of Theodosia — The Father's Grief — Anecdote.

It was the silent *Mr. Arnot* who remained on board the *Aurora*. After sending letters to the post-office, one directed to Theodosia, and another to Samuel Swartwout, that "strange" individual dined with the pilot and second mate on salt beef, potatoes, and sea-biscuit, and then fell with far keener appetite upon a file of Boston papers.

All that day, and through the succeeding night, a storm of wind, rain, and hail raged round the ship with a fury seldom seen so late in the spring, even at Boston. The ship broke from her moorings, and was dashed with violence against another vessel. The deck and bulwarks were glazed with ice, and the wind roared through the icy rigging. But Burr sat late over his papers in the cabin quite absorbed — for he had a world of news to learn, and his fate might be foreshadowed in a paragraph. As the night drew on, the last sailor stole away over the ship's side, and went to seek his pleasure in the town; and long before Burr "turned in," he was alone in the *Aurora*. Not a creature slept in the ship but him.

Such was the returning exile's first welcome to the country which his fathers had honored, and which had once been well pleased to honor him. He thought lightly of it. When a more furious gust than usual thundered above his head, it oc-

curred to him what an absurd voyage he should make if the ship should be blown out to sea, and he all alone in her.

The next morning, as he found there was neither fuel, food, nor cook on board the ship, he was compelled to go on shore. During the voyage, by the sale of some books, he had contrived to raise thirty-two dollars, and to buy or borrow of one of the passengers a large, old-fashioned wig. He had, also, devoted leisure moments to the development of as much whisker as his countenance was capable of. His clothes, too, were selected with a view to giving him a different air and contour from those he had been wont to exhibit. Disguised thus with wig, whiskers, and strange garments, *Mr. Arnot* went on shore, and took board in a small, plain boarding-house, near the wharf, kept by the widow of a sea-captain.

His disguise was soon subjected to a terrible test. It was necessary to go to the custom-house and get a permit to land his effects, signed by the collector. On inquiry he learned that the collector was Mr. Dearborn (a son of General Dearborn, Jefferson's Secretary of War), who had sat often with Colonel Burr at his father's table, and knew him as well as he did his own brother. The Dearborn family, moreover, had shown particular animosity to Burr since his misfortunes, and it was certain that if the collector recognized him, he would instantly send the news of his arrival to Washington. Let Burr tell the story of this adventure.

"I took with me," he wrote in his diary, "a young man to show me the way to the custom-house, and entered with all possible composure; passed under the nose of Mr. Dearborn into the adjoining room, where the first part of the business was to be done. The officer to whom I was directed asked me to enumerate my effects; for this I was not prepared, supposing that the list of them would be taken from the manifest. Nevertheless, I repeated them off as fast as he could write, though they consisted of eighteen different articles; trunks, boxes, portmanteaus, bundles, rolls, etc. He then bade me sign my name to it, which I did, thus: *A. Arnot;* I think that is very like it. Then he directed me to take it to the collector, who would sign it: here was the rub. I told the young

man, my conductor, to take it and get it signed for me, for that I was obliged to run as fast as possible to see after my things, the ship being just about to haul out. He took it, and I got out as fast as I could, passing again under the nose of Dearborn. I do assure thee that I felt something lighter when I got down into the street. But my trouble and danger were not yet ended. When I got to the wharf, all my effects were already lying pell-mell on the ground, and two tide-waiters there, ready to examine them on the spot. As every body here is now idle by reason of the embargo, there were collected more than five hundred people to see what was going forward. Trunks, boxes, bundles, every one opened, and rummaged to the bottom. In many of the books my name was written, but it happened that he did not open in that page. Every parcel of letters showed also the name of A. Burr; but, as I assisted in the search, I took care how I presented these parcels to him. The ceremony lasted about two hours, and I was another hour repacking; working and sweating like a horse, the mob crowding round to see the strange things. Of the number present, it is probable that more than half had seen me before; and I expected every minute to hear some one exclaim, 'Colonel Burr, by ——!' But I heard nothing. Finally, got all to my lodgings, the whole expense being six dollars."

But why such extreme fear of recognition? There were excellent reasons for it. The government prosecutions still hung suspended over his head; and Madison, who had been so importunate sixteen years before, in urging General Washington to send Burr as embassador to France, had imbibed all Jefferson's aversion to him. And secondly, two of Burr's largest creditors in New York held executions against him, and would probably throw him into jail for debt the very hour he should appear in the city. It was therefore necessary for him to remain concealed in Boston until the receipt of information from his friends in New York through Swartwout.

In 1812 it required five days to get an answer from New York through the mail. The five days passed; no letter. A week; no letter. Knowing well the promptness of Swart-

wout and his impregnable fidelity, he concluded that the letter had miscarried, and wrote again. Two weeks passed; still no answer. Meanwhile, his stock of money was running frightfully low. It was very characteristic of the man, that in this crisis of his fate, when he had just twenty-six dollars in the world, he lent sixteen dollars to his landlady. "How very prudent," he wrote. "But don't scold. I am sure they will repay it." It was repaid, just as his store was reduced to a five cent piece. Then a fellow passenger called to borrow ten dollars of Mr. Arnot, which that gentleman lent with the air of a Vice-President. In the very nick of time, that, too, was repaid. He attempted to raise a little money on one or two articles of jewelry which he had tried in vain to sell in London; but no one was willing to give any thing like their value for them. Something must be done, or he would soon be so deeply in debt as not to be able to leave the town. Borrowing a directory — not a voluminous work at that day — he pored over its pages to find the name of some person whom he could trust — some one among the thousands that would have been proud to welcome him ten years before, who would not spurn and betray him now. He lighted upon the name of a man who had been under his command on the Quebec expedition in 1775. He had not seen him since; but as he had never known a man that had served under him in war, who was not ever after his devoted friend, he determined to call upon this old soldier. Burr used to relate this interview with infinite glee. Going up to the door of a handsome house, he plied the knocker, and an infirm old gentleman soon appeared.

"Does Mr. —— live here?"

He did.

"Is he at home?"

He was at home.

"Can I see him?"

"I am the person," said the old gentleman.

Burr bowed, and lowering his voice, said, "I am Aaron Burr."

"What! the Aaron Burr who was Vice-President of the United States?"

"The same."

"You *baint!*" exclaimed the old soldier, astounded and bewildered at the intelligence.

In a manner much too deferential for Burr's present purpose, he invited him in. They went into the parlor, where Burr soon learned that the old man, after a life of industry, had now retired from business with a decent independence. But he treated his former commander with such extreme respect, that Burr was compelled, much against his will, to play the great man and distinguished guest, and actually came away, without so much as mentioning the object of his visit. The old soldier returned his call, and showed him many friendly attentions, but they never reached the awful subject of pecuniary aid.

Recurring to the directory, he found the name of a college classmate, who, up to the time of his departure for Europe, had always professed friendship for him. To this man, who was very rich, he sent a note, announcing his presence in Boston, and requesting an interview. The rich man replied that he had great respect for Colonel Burr and bore him much good will; but, *but* — his position was very delicate — he would *think* of it, and, if he did not call he would write. Burr made the following comment in his diary: "Now, I engage he will do neither one nor the other. When a man takes time to consider whether he will do a good or civil action, be assured he will never do it. The baser feelings, the calculations of interest and timidity, always prevail. But did you ever hear of such meanness? This very J. Mason was at Richmond during the trial, saw all the vile persecutions which I encountered, and spoke of them with indignation and contempt; came often to see me, and openly avowed a friendship for me. He is immensely wealthy, and not a candidate for any office. What should restrain such a man from expressing his feelings? Timidity." He was correct in his prediction. Mason neither came nor wrote. In his dire extremity Burr wrote again, requesting him to advance a sum of money upon his books, some of which were rare (in America) and valuable. Mason coldly replied, that "he had retired

from mercantile business, and it was therefore inconvenient for him to make advances." How admirably Burr bore such cruel, cutting slights! If, for an instant, he was stung into anger, reflection soon came to his aid, reminding him of the allowances always to be made for uncultivated human nature, *subjected* from infancy to the twin tyrants, FEAR and DESIRE.

He called upon a lady whom he had known and benefited in other days, whom he had not seen for sixteen years, and who was now infirm and half blind. At the first glance, she penetrated his disguise. With an air of astonishment and delight, she called him by name, seized his hand, welcomed him with enthusiasm, summoned her son, and showed him all possible respect and attention. But she was poor, and she was a lady, and the financial problem was not spoken of between them.

Fifteen days after his arrival, came the letter from Swartwout, breathing hope and promise. His old friends in New York, Swartwout assured him, were still true and warm; his old enemies not inclined to be vindictive. The two creditors, however, were inexorable; nothing would satisfy them but payment or approved security. He was strongly inclined to go at once to New York, let the executions take their course, and submit to reside within the "limits." "To this," he wrote to his daughter, "I should have no great repugnance in point of pride or feeling, but there are two objections pretty cogent; first and principally, *you*. I fear your little heart would sink to hear that Gamp was on the limits. To be sure, if you could come there and see how gay he was, be supported by the light of his countenance, and catch inspiration from his lips, you would forget that he was not in paradise." Besides, he had a project of matrimony, which would be defeated by his confinement within the limits. "You have already," he added, "suffered too much on my account, and I come now to sacrifice myself for you in any way and every way; that of marriage is one, and no hope of that while a prisoner; and as to the payment of my debts, if I am confined to the mere practice of the law, debarred from all those speculations in which

I might engage if at large, it will be the work of many years, and in all that time I could do you little or no good."

What were his surprise and delight to read in Theodosia's first letter, not merely that she could bear his going into confinement, but that she spontaneously recommended it. He was resolved. He would go to New York, whatever the consequences.

It was the treasury of Harvard University that had the honor of paying Colonel Burr's passage, per sloop, from Boston to New York. The old soldier had communicated, in the strictest confidence, of course, the fact of Burr's presence in Boston to a select circle of friends, among whom was Dr. Kirkland, the President of the University. He also intimated to the doctor, that Burr, as he conjectured, had more books and less money than was convenient. Whereupon the doctor having expressed a desire for an interview, and a willingness to buy for the college library Burr's Bayle and Moreri, he was gratified in both particulars. He passed an hour tête-á-tête with Colonel Burr, and paid him forty dollars for the books, leaving it to the seller's choice to take back the books and accept the money as a loan. The next day found him on board the sloop, his debts discharged, his passage (twenty dollars) paid, waiting for wind and tide to waft him on his way.

Now, he had chosen this mode of traveling for the purpose of avoiding recognition, and had selected this particular sloop because neither captain, crew, nor passengers belonged to New York. His feelings may be imagined when he found that the captain and most of the cabin passengers were *his own relations* — people from Fairfield, Connecticut, where his father was born, and where he had spent some of the happiest days of his own youth. The captain's wife, in particular, was wonderfully like his own sister. "The same large mouth, replete with goodness, sweetness, and firmness; the same large, aquiline nose, contour of face, and the two dimples; and, when disturbed, knits the brow and forehead in the same singular manner; the form of the eye the same; very long; the color not quite so dark. There is only wanting the broad forehead of ma soœur to be perfect. The same commanding figure.

Many of her attitudes and movements, of which, you know, every human being has something peculiar. I look at her for hours together with an inexpressible interest, particularly while sleeping; but I speak not for fear of betraying myself. She must be a relative; but, thus far, I have not learned her family name. I dare not question any one, from apprehensions of being questioned in return."

This lady, he found, was his cousin. One day, some one asked her for whom a boy's hat which she had in her hand was intended.

"*For Burr*," she replied.

"Your brother?" inquired Burr.

"No; my nephew."

At Fairfield, while the sloop was at anchor, he was asked by his cousin, Thaddeus Burr, to go fishing. He declined, of course. After looking for many hours with longing eyes upon the familiar coast, he ventured to go ashore. "I strolled three or four hours round some miles in the neighborhood. Every object was as familiar to me as those about Richmond Hill, and the review brought up many pleasant and whimsical associations. At several doors I saw the very lips I had kissed and the very eyes which had ogled me in the persons of their grandmothers about six-and-thirty years ago. I did not venture into any of their houses, lest some of the grandmothers might recollect me." He afterward went to the captain's house, where a startling incident occurred. He was sitting reading a newspaper, when a voice behind him suddenly exclaimed,

"Ah! Burr, how goes it?"

He looked round with doubtful glance, and discovered, to his great relief, that the individual addressed was one whose middle name was Burr, and who was commonly called by it.

The voyage lasted nine days. At twilight on the 8th of June, the captain of the sloop, fearing to run through Hurl Gate at so late an hour, came to for the night at a wharf outside, to Burr's infinite disappointment; for it was essential to his plan that he should reach New York after dark. The

last page of the diary narrates with graphic brevity the incidents of this evening.

"To add to my chagrin, there came to the wharf from the house an old man, who asked if any of us would walk up. The voice was very familiar to me, and I desired the mate, who was near me, to ask who kept that tavern. "Billy Mariner," says the same voice; a fellow who had known me familiarly since I was eight years old. At this moment there hove in sight a very small sail-boat, standing down. The sloop's barge being alongside, I engaged two of the men for a dollar to put me on board that sail-boat, which was done, and thus I found myself again with the prospect of arriving at the hour I wished. The sail-boat proved to be a pleasure-boat belonging to two young farmers of Long Island. They were not bound to New York, but to the Narrows, but very kindly agreed to put me on shore in the city. When we got opposite the city the wind wholly failed us; and the tide, now very rapid, set us over to the Long Island shore; and we, having no oars, were wholly at its mercy. It seemed inevitable that I must make a voyage to the Narrows, for they could not now get to the Long Island land so as to set me on shore. When we were nearly opposite the Battery I heard the noise of oars, and hailed; was answered; and I begged them to come alongside. It proved to be two vagabonds in a skiff, probably on some thieving voyage. They were very happy to set me on shore in the city for a dollar, and at half past eleven I was landed; and S. S. having given me his address, 66 Water-street, thither I went cheerfully, and rejoicing in my good fortune. I knocked and knocked, but no answer. I knocked still harder, supposing they were asleep, till one of the neighbors opened a window and told me that nobody lived there. I asked where lived Mr. S. Of that she knew nothing. I was now to seek a lodging. But very few houses were open. Tried at two or three taverns, all full; cruised along the wharf, but could find no place. It was now midnight, and nobody to be seen in the street. To walk about the whole night would be too fatiguing. To have sat and slept on any stoop would have been thought no hardship; but then, the

danger that the first watchman who might pass would take me up as a vagrant and carry me up to the watch-house, was a dénouement not at all to my mind. I walked on, thinking that in the skirts of the town I might meet at that hour some charitable personne, who, for one or two dollars and l'amour de Dieu, would give me at least half a bed; but seeing in an alley a light in the cellar of a small house, I called and asked for a lodging; was answered yes; shown into a small garret, where were five men already asleep; a cot and a sort of cover-lid was given me. I threw open the window to have air, lay down, and slept profoundly till six. Being already dressed, I rose, paid for my lodging twelve cents, and sallied out to 66 Water-street, and there had the good luck to find Sam. alone. He led me immediately to the house of his brother Robert, and here I am, in possession of Sam.'s room in Stone-street, in the city of New York, on this 8th day of June, anno Dom. 1812. Just four years since we parted at this very place."

The day was spent in quiet consultation. In the evening, Colonèl Burr went to the house of a lady in Nassau-street who had been his fast friend through all his misfortunes. She was overjoyed to see him. It was as though he had dropped from the clouds. The family gathered round, overwhelming him with congratulations and welcome. He told the lady his design, to begin again the practice of the law, to forswear politics, to toil for his creditors and for Theodosia. Her reply was:

"Colonel, here shall be your office; that suite of rooms is yours, as long as you need or desire them."

The frank and gallant offer was accepted.

He lay concealed for some weeks, until assurances were received that the government would not molest him, and until means were found to mollify the rigor of his creditors. It was not till twenty days after his arrival in New York that the newspapers gave the first intimation of his presence in the country, when the following paragraph appeared in the *New York Columbian:* "Colonel Burr, says a Boston paper of Wednesday, once so celebrated for his talents, and latterly so much talked of for his sufferings, arrived at Newburyport

from France and England, and passed through this town on his way to New York." The next day, the editor added that Colonel Burr had spent ten days in Boston *incog.* After that, no further allusion to his arrival appears — the papers and the public mind being full of the declaration of war, the assassination of Mr. Perceval, and the proposed nomination of De Witt Clinton, Burr's triumphant rival, to the presidency.

At the right moment he caused a line to appear in a newspaper to the effect that, "Aaron Burr had returned to the city and had resumed the practice of the law at —— Nassau-street."

Its appearance electrified the city. Before Colonel Burr slept that night, five hundred gentlemen called upon him. The feeling for the moment seemed to be general throughout the city, that he had been treated with undue severity, and that the past should be buried in oblivion. Colonel Troup, whom Burr had assisted with money and with books to get into the profession of the law thirty years before, and who had since made a fortune by its practice, and retired, now in part repaid his early benefactor by lending him his law library.

Burr had a very small tin sign, bearing only his name, nailed up in front of the house, and commenced business. Beginning with a cash capital of less than ten dollars, and that borrowed, he received, for opinions and retaining fees, in the course of his first twelve business days, the sum of two thousand dollars! It was a time of trouble to the community, and, therefore, of harvest to lawyers, and clients were eager for the services of the man who never lost a case. The future began to wear a brighter hue of promise than it had known for many a year. The father wrote cheerfully to the daughter, acquainting her with the happy turn his fortunes had taken, and anticipating the day when they should meet again after the longest separation they had ever known.

Alas! misery was impending over him, so acute and ir remediable, so far transcending all he had yet experienced, that it may be truly said of him in this month of June, 1812, that his sorrows were yet to *begin!* A strange fortune was Aaron Burr's, to have uninterrupted success and prosperity in

the first half of his life, and then nothing *but* failure and disaster, in ever accumulating force, until, the very capacity to suffer being exhausted, nothing could touch him further!

About six weeks after his return to New York, he received Theodosia's reply to his cheering letters, in these heart-rending words: "A few miserable days past, my dear father, and your late letters would have gladdened my soul; and even now I rejoice at their contents as much as it is possible for me to rejoice at any thing; but there is no more joy for me; the world is a blank. I have lost my boy. My child is gone for ever. He expired on the 30th of June. My head is not now sufficiently collected to say any thing further. May Heaven, by other blessings, make you some amends for the noble grandson you have lost." Governor Alston added: "One dreadful blow has destroyed us; reduced us to the veriest, the most sublimated wretchedness. That boy, on whom all rested; our companion, our friend — he who was to have transmitted down the mingled blood of Theodosia and myself — he who was to have redeemed all your glory, and shed new luster upon our families — that boy, at once our happiness and our pride, is taken from us — *is dead.*"

It was a dreadful blow, indeed. The boy, only eleven years old, had shown all those early signs of talent and courage which were peculiarly dear to Colonel Burr and his daughter. Tradition reports him to have been a beautiful child, and of an air so superior that he had, even at that age, acquired a kind of celebrity in the narrow circle of South Carolina society. Burr was passionately fond of him. The boy was always in his thoughts. Wherever he went, he spoke of his noble, gallant little grandson, and told little stories of his courage, wit, and tenderness. How many hundreds of miles he had walked in Paris and London to procure books, coins, and trinkets for him, and how many hundreds more in rescuing them from pawnbrokers and jewelers! What dreams he had indulged of Gampillo's future greatness! *He* was to be the perfect man. In *him*, at length, were to be blended strength and gentleness, intelligence and grace — all worthy qualities, and all shining ones. *He* was to realize Chesterfield's beau ideal

— a man of Saxon heart, brain, and muscle, with Celtic quickness, wit, and polish! And this boy was dead. The stricken grandsire shed few tears, but he ceased to mourn his loss only with his life. The mention of the subject would start the tear, but this man of iron would fold his arms tightly over his breast, as if, by the exertion of mere physical strength, to repress the rising tide of emotion. He tried to console the bereaved mother, but she was inconsolable — she would not be comforted. "Whichever way I turn," she wrote, a month after the event, "the same anguish still assails me. You talk of consolation. Ah! you know not what you have lost. I think Omnipotence could give me no equivalent for my boy; no, none — none."

But he had not drained the cup. A deeper and bitterer draught was yet in reserve.

Theodosia languished. She waited some months at her home in the South, for a safe and suitable opportunity to journey northward, to draw strength and hope from the source that had never failed her — her father's inspiring presence. But her husband was now Governor of the State and general of militia. The country was at war with Great Britain, and he could not leave his post. She would have come alone by land in her own carriage, but it chanced that their coachman was a drunkard, and needed the eye of a master. It was resolved, at last, that she should go by sea, and her father sent a physician from New York to superintend the embarkation and attend her on the passage — for she was, by this time, sadly emaciated, and very weak. Her passage was taken in a small schooner named the *Patriot*, which, after a privateering cruise, had put into Charleston, and was about to return to New York with her guns stowed below. She was commanded by an experienced captain, and had for sailing master an old New York pilot, noted for his skill and courage. The vessel was famous for her sailing qualities, and, it was confidently expected, would perform the voyage to New York in five or six days. She sailed with a fair and gentle wind from Charleston, on the last day but one of the year 1812, Theodosia, her physician, and her maid, occupying the principal cabin.

The *Patriot* was never seen nor heard of again! A few days after she left Charleston, a storm of extreme violence raged along the whole coast; during which, in all probability, the vessel with all on board went down off Cape Hatteras.

The agonies of suspense endured by the husband and the father, the eager letters written by each to tell the other she had not arrived, the weary waiting for the mail, the daily hope, the daily despair, the thousand conjectures that arose to give a moment's relief — all this can neither be imagined nor described. For months, the agonized father could not go upon the Battery, then the chief promenade of the city of New York, without looking wistfully down toward the Narrows, with a secret pining hope that even yet the missing vessel might appear. It was long before he could relinquish the idea that some outward-bound ship might have rescued the passengers, and carried them away to a distant port, whence soon the noble Heart would return to bless her father's life. By-and-by, some idle tales were started in the newspapers, that the *Patriot* had been captured by pirates, and all on board murdered except Theodosia, who was carried on shore a captive.

"No, no," said Burr to a friend who mentioned the groundless rumor, "she is indeed *dead*. She perished in the miserable little pilot-boat in which she left Charleston. Were she alive, all the prisons in the world could not keep her from her father. When I realized the truth of her death, the world became a blank to me, and life had then lost all its value." To his son-in-law he wrote that he felt "severed from the human race."

During the period of suspense, he never expressed his feelings in words. He went about his daily business wearing a serene countenance, for he held it to be an affront to exhibit to others a face of gloom. When he could no longer resist the feeling of certainty that Theodosia was lost, he quietly put out of sight every object which was peculiarly associated with her, every thing which her tasteful hands had made or adorned, every thing that had once been hers. For a long time, *Theodosia* was a name banished from the vocabulary of

his house. Two or three years after her loss, he received from South Carolina a large box containing articles which had belonged to her, and some relics of her mother which she had preserved all her life. He opened the box and recognized the familiar things. Then, going into an adjoining room, where a very intimate friend was sitting, he said,

"I have something to show you."

He led him by the hand to the open trunk, and, in a voice shaken with emotion, said,

"*What a fate*, poor thing!"

He closed the trunk, without another word, placed it out of sight, and made no further allusion to it for a long time. Some of the objects which so deeply moved him upon that occasion are still in existence, and in the possession of individuals to whom he gave them twenty years later, and to whom they are a precious possession.

Theodosia was a nearly complete realization of her father's ideal of a woman. With a great deal of wit, spirit, and talent, and possessing the elegant vivacity of manner which he so much admired, and a face strikingly beautiful, and strikingly peculiar, she also inherited all that a daughter could inherit of her father's courage and fortitude. In both solid and elegant accomplishments she was very far superior to the ladies of her time. After shining in the circles of New York, she led the society of South Carolina, until the time of her father's misfortunes, when she shared his ostracism in both places, and was proud to share it. Her love for her father was more like passion than filial affection. Her faith in his honor and in his worth was absolute and entire. Immovable in that faith, she could cheerfully have braved the scorn, the derision of a world. She would have left all to follow him. She would have renounced her husband, if her husband had faltered in his duty to a father-in-law whose fault, whatever it was, he had shared. No father ever more loved a child, nor more laboriously proved his love, than Aaron Burr. No child ever repaid a father's care and tenderness, with a love more constant and devoted than Theodosia. That such a woman could so entirely love and believe in him, was the fact

which first led the writer of these lines to suspect that the Aaron Burr who actually lived and walked these streets must have been a very different being indeed from the Aaron Burr of the popular imagination. Not necessarily a *good* man, in the noblest sense of that greatest of words; but, certainly, not the monster he is thought.

It was a maxim of the "Burr School" (as surviving friends of Colonel Burr still call his system of life), to accept the Inevitable without repining. He held it weakness to mourn, and wisdom to enjoy. After losses, he maintained, we should hold all the faster to what is *left*, and enjoy it. This was his principle; and he acted upon it; and was prone to undervalue those who did not. If it had been his fortune to go before his daughter to the other world, he would have told her with his dying breath that if she desired truly to honor his memory, she must be happy, and a source of happiness when he was gone. Therefore, though the loss of his daughter and her boy had taken from his life its object and its charm, he exhibited to the world a composed demeanor, and strove, in all ways, to enjoy the passing hour. Time heals or assuages all wounds. He put his grief away from him. He would *not* be sorrowful.

It seemed as though, to the end of his life, he was more tender and loving to all the children he ever met for Gampillo's sake. Some months after these events, he chanced one day, on a journey to Albany, to visit some very old friends near Newburg, whom he had not seen for a long time. He knocked at the door of the house two or three times, and no one came; when, presuming on his intimacy with the family, he pushed open the front door, and entered a parlor. There he was shocked to see, lying in an open coffin, the body of a child whom he had known as the delight of the household, and of whose sickness even he had not heard. He was observed by a servant to gaze with singular intensity upon the countenance of the dead child, and to sit down by its side, covering his face with his hands. Then he rose and left the house. A few days after, he wrote a letter to the afflicted

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family, apologizing for his strange behavior. "Ever since the event," he wrote, "which separated me from mankind, I have been able neither to give nor to receive consolation." That "event," they supposed, was the duel with Hamilton — so little did they know of the man they had known so long.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ANECDOTES AND REMINISCENCES OF HIS LATER YEARS.

Popular Notion of Burr's Later Years — His Debts — Starts General Jackson for the Presidency — The Medcef Eden Case — Remarkable Case of Incest — Interview with Henry Clay — Scene between Burr and General Scott — Burr Revisits the Scene of the Duel — Burr's Meeting with Mrs. Hamilton — Burr and Vanderlyn the Painter — Recollections of Dr. Woodbridge — His Religious Belief — His Opinion of the Bible — Anecdotes — Generosity of Burr — Anecdotes — Story of Burr and General Jackson — Burr's Opinion of Jackson — Burr's Hale Old Age — Burr and Fanny Kemble.

There is no part of the long life of Aaron Burr, respecting which the popular idea is more at variance with the truth, than the period which we now enter upon. That popular idea is forcibly expressed by the concluding words of a writer in the old New York *Review* (January, 1838) — a writer whose profession and whose errors should have conspired to render just, if not charitable:

"With the recklessness produced by a present which had no comfort, and a future which had no hope, he (Aaron Burr) surrendered himself without shame to the groveling propensities which had formed his first step on the road to ruin, until at last, overcome by disease, in the decay of a worn-out body, and the imbecility of a much-abused mind, he lay a shattered wreck of humanity, just entering upon eternity with not enough of *man* left about him to make a Christian out of. Ruined in fortune, and rotten in reputation, thus passed from the busy scene one who might have been a glorious actor in it; and when he was laid in the grave, decency congratulated itself that a nuisance was removed, and good men were glad that God had seen fit to deliver society from the contaminating contact of a festering mass of moral putrefaction."

It would be difficult to put into words a statement more false than this sounding, shameful, pitiless paragraph. It

would have been so easy to find out the truth about Colonel Burr's last years in 1838. It has not been very difficult in 1857; for there are still several persons living whose recollections of him in those years are full and accurate, and who have been more than willing to tell what they know. Groveling propensities! A more delicate creature never lived in masculine form than Aaron Burr. A man of refined appetite; in no bad sense a sensualist; abhorring *gross* pleasures, pursuits, and persons. Look at his face! Is it the face of a sensualist? But I reserve this subject for consideration in another chapter, and proceed to narrate here such events and incidents of this period of his life as seem worthy of brief record.

Observe, first, the circumstances of the man. He is declining into the vale of years; he is fifty-seven years old. He is alone in the world. The excitement produced by his sudden arrival in the city soon subsided, and the old odium gathered thick about him. From the first, he took the honorable, the right resolution of knowing those only who first recognized him. Thus he acquired the habit, which many will remember, of glancing under his eyelids at an approaching acquaintance to see whether or not he meant to cut him. Usually the approaching acquaintance had that intention, and was deprived of the opportunity by Colonel Burr's looking another way. Thus the circle of his acquaintance grew ever narrower, until it included few beside his clients and his tried friends, whose friendship dated back to revolutionary times. For, if there is a noble element in human nature which inclines us to take the weaker side, there is a base principle, too, which urges us to join in a hue and cry. He made not the slightest endeavor to set himself right with the public. He never sought friends. Besides the general causes of odium, half a dozen influential families of the city imagined that it was part of their duty to the dead to heap obloquy upon the living. There was a "set" who took the infamy of Aaron Burr in charge, and nursed it, and never let it cease growing until it filled the world.

He was beleaguered with creditors, some of whom had bought expedition debts for a fraction of their face, and were clamorous for payment. A large proportion of the immense

expenses incurred during his trial had never been paid. There were his debts, too, to the Duc de Bassano, and others in Europe, which had peculiar claims; and, beside, there was a silent, but needy company of relations and near connections who had advanced money they could ill spare in aid of the expedition. Of old debts incurred in prosperous days, there were several thousand dollars. Many had been ruined by the failure of the expedition, whom Colonel Burr felt bound to assist in their extremity, and from whose application he could never, to his last breath, turn away. The least meritorious of his creditors were, of course, the most relentless; and he resolved, from the beginning, not to attempt to pay, until he could pay justly — until he saw a prospect of paying a proportion to all.

The largeness of the sum which he had received in the first few days of his practice, was due to a variety of unusual circumstances; a large part of it was payment for services yet to be rendered, The most prudent of men, in his situation, could not have saved for his creditors more than a very few thousands a year, and Aaron Burr, in his use of money, was never prudent. He was one of those who are constitutionally incapable of driving a good bargain *for himself* — through whose fingers money slips in an unaccountable manner.

Desperate were his first struggles with this mass of indebtedness. Without capital to speculate with, his only source of income was the practice of his profession in a city where it soon became a disgrace to be seen in his company. For three or four years, the utmost efforts of his ingenuity could do no more than keep him out of jail. His legal services were in request — particularly his opinions in real estate cases, and he earned considerable sums; but his debts were so numerous and so enormous, that merely to defeat the attempts of creditors to confine his person, absorbed his income and tasked his powers. Many times he was kept out of the dreaded "limits" by some wealthy friend giving bail for his appearance. It was a life-long battle. The greater debts were never paid. Even the sum due to the Duc de Bassano is ordered, in his

last will, *to be* paid if he should die possessed of property sufficient for the purpose.

The details of this too unequal strife need not be dwelt upon. It formed the business and shifting basis of his life. Wearied, at length, with the endeavor to accomplish the impossible task, it is not to be denied, that, with advancing age and decaying powers, he grew indifferent to it, and often gave away in charity sums of money that might have appeased a creditor. This was wrong, of course, but the demands upon his charity were very numerous and pressing, and some of them were of the nature of debt itself. For example, Colonel Burr, upon his return to New York, found Luther Martin a ruined man — ruined through high living and deep drinking. He owed Luther Martin much money for his legal services, and more gratitude for his generous championship; and he paid both debts by taking him into his house, assigning him a permanent apartment, and maintaining him in comfort and dignity, until he died in 1826 at the age of eighty-one. Another example was that of a relative of Dr. Hosack, who fell into drinking and destitution in his old age, to whom Colonel Burr gave aid and shelter.

One day, when some dastard soul rebuked him for aiding men who had disgraced themselves by bad habits, he made this reply: "They may be black to the world. I care not how black. They were ever white to me!"

The only important act of Burr's later life was his suggestion of a course of political action which resulted, finally, in ending the supremacy of the Virginia politicians and electing General Jackson to the presidency. He knew all political secrets, as before, and had much more to do with advising political measures than would now be willingly confessed by certain politicians of that day who still linger on the stage. In the fall of 1815, he ascertained that James Monroe would be nominated for the presidency by the democratic congressional caucus. He was opposed to the system of nominating candidates by congressional caucuses, as being "hostile to all freedom and independence of suffrage;" he was opposed to Virginian supremacy; he was opposed to James Monroe. "A

certain junto," he wrote to Governor Alston, "of actual and factitious Virginians, having had possession of the government for twenty-four years, consider the United States as their property, and, by bawling 'Support the administration,' have so long succeeded in duping the republican public." In the same letter he drew a very unflattering sketch of Colonel Monroe: "Naturally dull and stupid; extremely illiterate; indecisive to a degree that would be incredible to one who did not know him; pusillanimous, and, of course, hypocritical; has no opinion on any subject, and will be always under the government of the worst men; pretends, as I am told, to some knowledge of military matters, but never commanded a platoon, nor was ever fit to command one. '*He served in the revolutionary war!*' — that is, he acted a short time as aid-de-camp to Lord Stirling, who was regularly * * *. Monroe's whole duty was to fill his lordship's tankard, and hear, with indications of admiration, his lordship's long stories about himself. Such is Monroe's military experience. I was with my regiment in the same division at the time. As a lawyer, Monroe was far below mediocrity. He never rose to the honor of trying a cause of the value of a hundred pounds. This is a character exactly suited to the views of the Virginia junto."

The remedy he proposed was the nomination of a popular character like Andrew Jackson, the hero of the late war, and then in the flush of his boundless popularity. "The moment," continued Burr, "is auspicious for breaking down this degrading system. The best citizens of our country acknowledge the feebleness of our administration. They acknowledge that offices are bestowed merely to preserve power, and without the smallest regard to fitness. If, then, there be a man in the United States of firmness and decision, and having standing enough to afford even a hope of success, it is your duty to hold him up to public view: that man is *Andrew Jackson*. Nothing is wanting but a respectable nomination, made before the proclamation of the Virginia caucus, and *Jackson's* success is inevitable. If this project should accord with your views, I could wish to see *you* prominent in the execution of

it. It must be known to be *your* work. Whether a formal and open nomination should now be made, or whether you should, for the present, content yourself with barely denouncing, by a joint resolution of both Houses of your legislature, congressional caucuses and nominations, you only can judge. One consideration inclines me to hesitate about the policy of a present nomination. It is this — that Jackson ought first to be admonished to be passive: for, the moment he shall be announced as a candidate, he will be assailed by the Virginia junto with menaces, and with insidious promises of boons and favors. *There is danger that Jackson might be wrought upon by such practices.*"

From that time General Jackson, as every one knows, was the popular candidate, *par excellence*, with ever-improving chances of success; until, in 1828, Colonel Burr saw his suggestion realized, and his old confederate and champion seated in the presidential chair. *Then*, the old soldier was in a position to aid, in another manner, the subjugation of the Spaniards in Texas! *Then*, he could give effect to the bent toward south-western acquisition which he had derived from Aaron Burr thirty years before!

The absorbing occupation of Burr's life for several years after his return from Europe, was the suit in chancery, well known to lawyers as the *Medcef Eden* case. His management of this cause was so remarkable and characteristic, that an outline of its history may interest the reader. Medcef Eden was a New York brewer who made a great fortune, and, dying in 1798, left his two sons a large amount of real estate upon the island of Manhattan. The two sons were to share the property equally, and if either died childless the survivor was to inherit the deceased's share. These young men, partly through their own extravagance, but chiefly through the dishonest sharpness of creditors, ran through their property in two or three years, and becoming bankrupts, were reduced to utter poverty. Their case was submitted afterward to the two leaders of the New York bar, Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, and the question was proposed, whether the estate could be recovered. Hamilton said it

could not; Burr was of opinion that it could. Hamilton's opinion was adopted: no proceedings were attempted; the matter was forgotten; and the Edens lived on in poverty. A year after Burr's return, he was reminded of the case by hearing of the death of one of the brothers. Meanwhile, the estate had enormously increased in value. Inquiring for the surviving brother, he found him in Westchester county, immersed in debt, and residing within debtors' "limits." The result was, that Burr, moneyless and in debt as he was, undertook to recover the estate, Eden agreeing to follow his advice in all things — to be, in fact, a passive instrument in his hands. Eden, his wife and two daughters, Burr brought to the city, established them in his own house, sent the daughters to school, and amused his leisure hours, for ten years, by laboring with the same assiduity for their mental improvement as he had done in former times for Theodosia's.

He went to work craftily. The valuable parts of the estate lay in the city itself, several lots being held by banks and other wealthy corporations. He let those alone, for a while, and confined his first efforts to the recovery of a small farm in the upper part of the island, his object being to get the *principle* quietly established, upon which to found the more important suits. The owner of the farm was informed of this intention, and it was further intimated to him, that if he would not too seriously contest and prolong the suit, he should be allowed to buy back his farm on his own terms. Burr won the suit. The case was appealed. He was again successful. Then he came down upon the holders of the city lots with a pelting storm of writs of ejectment — to their equal surprise and alarm. The litigation was then fairly begun, and the courts were kept busy at it for many years — until it became as familiar as the cause of "Jarndice and Jarndice." Among those who assisted Burr in the conduct of these suits was Martin Van Buren. Burr won suit after suit, and recovered, in time, a very large amount of property.

But, unfortunately, he began the war destitute of its "sinews," though his opponents were bountifully provided with the same. The suits were long, and some of them very expensive.

On the faith of the first decisions in his favor, he induced money-lenders, by the payment of excessive usury, to advance money upon property still in dispute, and thus it sometimes happened that neither he nor his client gained any pecuniary advantage from decisions which assigned them valuable houses and lands. Nevertheless, he gained enough to amply repay him for his trouble and toil, and his client was maintained with every comfort until he died, leaving Burr the guardian of his children. The daughters, it may be added, became accomplished women, and contracted respectable marriages.

One case, in which Burr was the leader, would furnish the groundwork of a thrilling romance. A brother and sister, the children of an ancient house in England, were led, by an extraordinary chain of circumstances, to suppose that they were not related, but were brought up as brother and sister to prevent their forming a tenderer relation. They fell in love, eloped, married, and fled to America. Hither their guardian followed them, and, the better to secure their separation, had them arrested on the charge of incest, and thrown into prison. In the old stone jail that formerly stood in the Park, between the City Hall and Broadway, Burr found the deluded pair and their daughter, a child of strange beauty. They protested their innocence and implored his aid. Entering warmly into the cause, he soon obtained the release of the beautiful unhappy mother, and her wonderfully lovely child. He gave them a home in his own house. The child grew to the age of three or four, when, fortunately for itself and its parents, it died. After a long confinement, the husband-brother was released in consequence of the death of the guardian who brought the suit. Both being then convinced of their error, the lady went to reside in Paris, and the gentleman returned to England, where he still resides. All this was done by Colonel Burr without fee or reward, for his clients were then destitute of resources; but, in after years, when he was a very old man, the gentleman, who had inherited a large fortune, sent him a considerable, though inadequate, fee.

A beautiful woman came to him one day to engage his services in a suit for divorce, which she was about to bring against

her husband. After hearing her story, he was averse to bringing the suit, and dissuaded her in terms like these: "Madame, your cause will have to be tried by twelve *men* — all sinners. They will have a fellow-feeling with the sinner; and, you know, a fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind. These men will have to be told, that for a long time past your husband has not been permitted to enjoy your society. They will *see* you and pity *him!* I assure you, my dear madame, it will be extremely difficult to get a verdict in your favor." The lady was convinced.

As a general rule, he was treated by the bar with distant respect. He was an antagonist to be afraid of. On one occasion, a lawyer of some note refused to be employed in an important cause in conjunction with Colonel Burr. The company who brought the suit deliberated awhile, and determined to adhere to Burr, to whom the papers were then confided. It was known to be his custom never to undertake a cause which he was not sure of winning, and it was known, too, that he had never lost a cause in his life which he had attended to himself. The opposing party waited with anxiety to hear whether Burr had accepted the case, and, on learning that he had, made an immediate offer to compromise.

Mr. Epes Sargent, in his ("campaign") Life of the great Kentuckian, tells us, that on his return from Ghent, Henry Clay visited the federal court-room in the city of New York. "On entering the court-room in the City Hall," says Mr. Sargent, "the eyes of the bench, bar, officers, and attendants upon the court, were turned upon Mr. Clay, who was invited to take a seat upon the bench, which he politely declined, and took a position in the bar. Shortly after, a small gentleman, apparently advanced in years, and with bushy, gray hair, whom Mr. Clay, for an instant, did not recognize, approached him. He quickly perceived it was Colonel Burr, who tendered his hand to salute Mr. Clay. The latter declined receiving it. The colonel, nevertheless, was not repulsed, but engaged in conversation with Mr. Clay, remarking, that he had understood, that besides the treaty of peace, the American commissioners had negotiated a good commercial convention with Great Brit-

ain. Mr. Clay replied coldly, that such a convention was concluded, and that its terms would be known as soon as it was promulgated by public authority. Colonel Burr expressed a wish to have an hour's interview with him, and Mr. Clay told him where he stopped — but the colonel never called."

These were busy years, as indeed were all the years of this man's life. A gentleman who spent some time in his office at this period, has described to me his manner of employing the day. He rose at the dawn. A breakfast of an egg and a cup of coffee sufficed for this most abstemious of men; after which he worked among his papers for some hours before his clerks and assistants arrived. He was a hard taskmaster: he "kept us all upon the jump." All day he was dispatching and receiving messages, sending for books, persons, and papers; expecting every command to be obeyed with next-to-impossible celerity, inspiring every one with his own zeal, and getting a surprising quantity of work accomplished. "He was *business incarnate*," said my informant. About ten in the evening he would give over, invite his companions to the side-board, and take a single glass of wine. Then his spirits would rise, and he would sit for hours telling stories of his past life, and drawing brief and graphic sketches of celebrated characters with whom he had acted. Often he was full of wit and gayety at such times; "the liveliest fellow in the world;" "as merry as a boy;" "never melancholy, never ill-natured." About midnight, or later, he would lie down upon a hard couch in a corner of his office, and sleep "like a child," until the morning. In his personal habits he was a thorough-going Spartan — eating little, drinking little, sleeping little, working hard. He was fond of calculating upon how small a sum life could be supported, and used to think that he could live well enough upon seventy-five cents a week.

And here may be introduced such fragments of his conversation as are still remembered.

His conversation upon the past was remarkable for its candor, humor, and charity. He denounced no one — not even General Wilkinson, of whom he spoke more severely than of any one else. He used to assert, in the most positive manner,

that Wilkinson had unequivocally *betrayed* him. Against Jefferson he did not seem to be embittered, though the publication of the "Anas" gave him a passing disgust. He described him as a very agreeable man in conversation; a man of no "presence;" a plain, country-looking man; a sincere and thorough "Jacobin" in opinion. He thought Jefferson's "leveling principles," as he called them, were very absurd, and had done great harm. Of the republican form of government, as here established, with its entirely fatal element of "rotation in office," he had an ill opinion, and was sure it could not last. One day, some gentlemen were conversing upon the subject in his presence, when one of them chanced to use the phrase, "expounders of the Constitution." At the moment a noisy crowd of electioneering Democrats were passing. Burr, who had stood silent for some time with his hands behind him, holding his hat (his favorite attitude), pointed to the mob, and said, "*They* are the expounders of the Constitution!"

General Washington he underrated to the last. Himself the quickest of mortals in apprehending and deciding, he could not admire a general who was so slow to make up his mind. He thought Washington, as before recorded, a very honest and well-intentioned country gentleman; but no great soldier, and very far indeed from being a demi-god. Burr disliked a dull person next to a coward, and he thought general Washington a dull person. Hamilton and other young scholar-soldiers of the Revolution were evidently of a similar opinion, but Hamilton thought that the popularity of the general was essential to the triumph of the cause, and, accordingly, he kept his opinion to himself. Burr, less prudent, less disinterested, perhaps, made no secret of his.

Carlyle declares, that the very stupidity of John Bull is wiser than other people's wisdom; and it may be remarked of General Washington, that, though he could not make a *bon mot*, nor always spell one when it was made, his dullness was brighter than the brilliancy of Hamilton and Burr. Let Burr, however, be commended for his candor in not *affecting* an admiration for a popular idol, with regard to whom it is

considered unpatriotic to have an opinion. His harmless criticism of his commander is less offensive and less *immoral* than the canting adulation of self-seeking politicians, who have succeeded in concealing the interesting traits of the man, and obscuring his real claim to the admiration of posterity.

People were often startled by the utter *nonchalance* with which Colonel Burr would allude to passages in his past life, which were generally thought to be infamous. The following scene, derived from an eye-witness, is an example:

It has been mentioned that on the opening of the trial at Richmond, young Winfield Scott occupied a conspicuous position above the audience. Before the trial had progressed far, he left Richmond, and never saw Colonel Burr again until after his return from Europe. On the evening of the day on which he was first named *General* Scott, he found himself at the house of a distinguished politician in Albany, where a little supper was to celebrate his promotion.

"Have you any objection, general, to be introduced to Colonel Aaron Burr?" inquired the giver of the feast.

"Any gentleman whom you choose to invite to your house," replied the general, "I shall be glad to know."

Colonel Burr entered; the introduction took place; the party sat down to whist, until supper was announced. At the table, the old colonel and the young general sat opposite each other, but no particular conversation occurred between them for some time. Meanwhile, General Scott, ever as courteous as brave, forbore to pronounce the word *Richmond*, or even *Virginia*, lest it should excite painful feelings in the mind of a fallen man. Suddenly, Colonel Burr looked up and said,

"General Scott, I've seen you before."

"Have you, indeed?" rejoined the general, supposing that he referred to some military scene, or other public occasion, in which he had figured.

"Yes," continued Burr, "*I saw you at my trial.*"

He then described the position and dress of the young gentleman in the court-room, and proceeded to converse about the scenes that transpired at Richmond precisely in the tone and manner of a casual spectator. The general was both

astonished and relieved. It was during the war of 1812 that this scene occurred, and the old soldier expressed cordial admiration of General Scott's gallantry and conduct. On the same occasion, Colonel Burr asked,

"Why don't the folks at Washington employ General Jackson?"

Some one said that Jackson had a command in the militia, and would soon be called into active service.

Burr said: "I'll tell you why they don't give him a commission; he's a friend of mine; that's the reason."

He talked with perfect freedom respecting his Mexican enterprise, particularly its comic incidents. Commenting on the charge that he had descended the river "in warlike array," he used to give a humorous description of his boats and their crews. Nothing is accurately enough remembered of his description to be given here, except that the manner of the descent was most ludicrously different from what is understood by the phrase "warlike array." What with the pranks of a large monkey and the music of a violin, his men seemed to have had a very merry voyage of it. He spoke kindly of Blennerhassett. He was not a bad man, Burr would say, though a weak one; a man of some knowledge, and no sense; who required no *persuading* to enter into the South-western scheme, but was madly eager to embark in it the moment it was mentioned. After Burr's return to America, he wrote to Mrs. Blennerhassett (in Ireland) for the letters and documents in her possession relating to the enterprise. She demanded a great price for them, which Burr was not in circumstances to give. He sent her two or three sums of money, however, in her destitution, the amounts of which are not remembered by my informant, though he is positive as to the fact of money being sent to her.

He conversed with equal freedom of the duel with Hamilton. He never blamed himself for his conduct in that affair. Despising the out-cry made about the duel, he would indulge, sometimes, in a kind of defiant affectation respecting it. "*My friend Hamilton — whom I shot*," he would say, with amazing nonchalance. Usually, however, he alluded to his antagonist

with respect, styling him "General Hamilton," and doing partial justice to his merits. "Was Hamilton a gentleman?" asked a foreigner once in Burr's hearing. Burr resented the question, and replied with hauteur: "Sir, *I* met him."

He told an anecdote relating to the duel, of which the following is the purport. On a journey, while stopping at a tavern to bait his horses, he strolled into the village, and saw a traveling exhibition of wax-works. To amuse an idle moment, he entered. Among the figures were two representing Hamilton and himself in the act of firing. The figures were vilely executed, and the exhibition was made the more ridiculous by some doggerel which the ambitious exhibitor had scrawled underneath. With some difficulty he made it out, as follows:

> "O Burr, O Burr, what hast thou done?
> Thou hast shooted dead great Hamilton.
> You hid behind a bunch of thistle,
> And shooted him dead with a great hoss pistol."

He told this story just as any one would have told it, and laughed at the lines as heartily as any of his auditors.

He was surprised, one day, to receive the following epistle, which is here transcribed from the original: "Aaron Burr: Sir, Please to meet me with the weapon you chuse on the 15 of may where you murdered my father at 1 o'clock with your second. 8 May 1819. J. A. Hamilton." To which he wrote a reply like this: "Boy, I never injured you: nor wished to injure your father. A. Burr." On reflection, however, he thought it best not to notice the communication, and tore up his reply. He was afterward informed that the letter was a forgery.

There was one remarkable occasion on which he spoke of the duel seriously and eloquently. It was when, for the only time in his life, he revisited the ground where it was fought. He went there to oblige a young friend, who wished to see a spot so famous. Leaving their boat at the foot of the heights of Weehawken, just where Burr had left his boat on that fatal morning a quarter of a century before, they climbed over the same rocks, and soon reached the ground. Except that the

rocks were covered with names, and that the ground was more overgrown with trees, the place had not changed in all those years: nor has it yet. It had changed owners, however, and belonged to a son* of Rufus King, Burr's colleague in the Senate, and Hamilton's friend and ally. In the boat Burr had been somewhat thoughtful and silent, but seemed to enjoy the bright day and pleasant shores, as he always enjoyed bright and pleasant things. On reaching the scene, he placed his companion on the spot where Hamilton had stood, and went to the place where he had stood himself, and proceeded to narrate the incidents of the occasion.

The conversation turned to the causes of the duel. As he talked, the old fire seemed to be rekindled within him; his eye blazed; his voice rose. He recounted the long catalogue of wrongs he had received from Hamilton, and told how he had forborne and forborne, and forgiven and forgiven, and even stooped to remonstrate — until he had no choice except to slink out of sight a wretch degraded and despised, or meet the calumniator on the field and silence him. He dwelt much on the meanness of Hamilton. He charged him with being malevolent and cowardly — a man who would slander a rival, and not stand to it unless he was cornered. "When he stood up to fire," said Burr, "he caught my eye, and quailed under it; he looked like a convicted felon." It was not true, he continued, that Hamilton did not fire at him; Hamilton fired *first*;† he heard the ball whistle among the branches, and saw the severed twig above his head. He spoke of what Hamilton wrote on the evening before the duel with infinite contempt. "It reads," said he, "like the confessions of a penitent monk." These isolated expressions, my informant says, convey no idea whatever of the fiery impressiveness with which he spoke. He justified all he had done; nay, applauded it.

He was moved to the depths of his soul: the pent-up feelings of twenty-five years burst into speech. His companion, who had known him intimately many years, and had never

* James G. King, for many years a great New York banker.

† Burr's second asserted the same thing, and maintained it to the last.

seen him roused before, was almost awe-struck at this strange outburst of emotion, and the startling force of many of his expressions. He remembers wondering that he should ever have thought Burr small of stature, for, during this scene, the loftiness of his demeanor was such, that his very form seemed to rise and expand. It was long before he regained his usual composure. All the way home he still spoke of the olden time, and seemed to renew his youth, and live over again his former life.

While upon this subject, I may introduce a specimen-falsehood which has had currency, and is actually narrated in a recent volume purporting to be a Life of Alexander Hamilton. "Only once, during the progress of Mrs. Hamilton's life," says the work referred to, "was she afflicted with the sight of her husband's murderer. In the year 1822 she was traveling from New York to Albany on one of the boats on the Hudson river. The company had been summoned to dinner. When Mrs. Hamilton had almost reached her seat in the dining-saloon, on raising her eyes she perceived Aaron Burr standing directly opposite to her, with the narrow width of the table alone between them. The shock was too much for her system, she uttered a loud scream, fell, and was carried in a fainting state from the apartment. As soon as she recovered, she insisted on being set on shore at the first landing-place. She refused to journey further on a vessel which contained the detested form of Aaron Burr. It is said that after the removal of Mrs. Hamilton from the dining-saloon, Burr deliberately sat down and ate a hearty dinner with the utmost composure."

The gentleman is still living, a well-known member of the New York bar, and a gentleman of unquestionable veracity, who was Burr's companion on the only occasion on which he and Mrs. Hamilton were ever together on board a steamboat. He informs me — which of course is evident enough — that this fine story is false in every particular. It was a small steamboat plying between New York and Manhattanville, on which the awkward renconter occurred. Mrs. Hamilton merely looked at Burr, as every body else looked at him; for he never went anywhere without being an object of universal attention.

Nothing unusual took place! All the passengers landed together at Manhattanville, and there was never any dinner eaten by passengers on board the boat. The universally-known fact that Mrs. Hamilton was not a fool, would of itself refute the story, one would think. Yet we find it printed and reprinted. It is a *fair* specimen of the stories told to the injury of Burr's reputation. Not one in ten is truer. It got into the papers in Burr's life-time, and he frequently referred to it, in illustrating his favorite topics — the deceptiveness of probabilities, and the inevitable falseness of the thing commonly called History.

Another story he used to tell in the same connection. The belief that he was the "deadest of dead shots," was universal throughout the country; whereas the fact was that he had had very little practice in all his life, and was only tolerably skilled in the use of the weapon. Phrenologists and sportsmen tell us that some men are good shots by nature. Burr was one of these; and the steadiness of his nerves gave him an advantage. But to the story. He was at Utica, attending the session of a court, at which there was a great concourse of lawyers. One afternoon, after the court had adjourned, a number of the younger members of the bar went into a field behind the court-house to fire pistols at a mark. After firing awhile, seeing Colonel Burr pass by, they invited him to join in the sport, all of them being extremely anxious to witness an exhibition of his renowned ability. He protested his want of skill, and begged off: but as they were very urgent, he at last consented. A pistol was handed him, where he stood, and, looking around for a mark, he said "There is a white knot in that post yonder; shall I fire at that?" It was about sixteen paces distant. He raised his pistol, took careful aim, and fired. The ball struck the exact center of the knot. It was a wonderful hit, and astonished no one so much as the individual who achieved it. He was urged to fire again, but having no wish to tarnish his easily-won honors, he retired from the field. On his way back through the wilderness to Albany, he stopped in a lonely place to water his horse, when the thought occurred to him to try what he could really do

with a pistol. He fired several shots. "I couldn't hit a barn-door," he would say; "but was there a man that saw me make that hit at Utica who could be persuaded that A. B. was not a dead shot?"

Other instances he gave from his own experience, in which he had been thought a necromancer, or possessed of a devil, merely from some accidental conjunction of circumstances, or by the use of means the most ordinary and obvious.

The interest which Colonel Burr took in the education of youth has been before alluded to. He always had a protégé in training, upon whose culture he bestowed unwearied pains and more money than he could always afford. The story of Vanderlyn, that most distinguished protégé he ever had, was one which he often related in these later years.

He was riding along in a curricle and pair, one day during his senatorial term, when one of his horses lost a shoe; and he stopped at the next blacksmith's to have it replaced. It was a lonely country place, not far from Kingston, in Ulster county, New York. He strolled about while the blacksmith was at work, and, returning, saw upon the side of a stable near by, a charcoal drawing of his own curricle and horses. The picture, which must have been executed in a very few minutes, was wonderfully accurate and spirited, and he stood admiring it for some time. Turning round, he noticed a boy a little way off, dressed in coarse homespun.

"Who did that?" inquired Burr, pointing to the picture.

"I did it," said the boy.

The astonished traveler entered into conversation with the lad, found him intelligent, though ignorant, learned that he was born in the neighborhood, had had no instruction in drawing, and was engaged to work for the blacksmith six months. Burr wrote a few words on a piece of paper, and said, as he wrote:

"My boy, you are too smart a fellow to stay here all your life. If ever you should want to change your employment and see the world, just put a clean shirt into your pocket, go to New York, and go straight to that address," handing the boy the paper.

He then mounted his curricle and was out of sight in a moment. Several months passed away, and the circumstance had nearly faded from the busy senator's recollection. As he was sitting at breakfast one morning, at Richmond Hill, a servant put into his hand a small paper parcel, saying that it was brought by a boy who was waiting outside. Burr opened the parcel, and found a coarse, country-made *clean shirt*. Supposing it to be a mistake, he ordered the boy to be shown in. Who should enter but the Genius of the Roadside, who placed in Burr's hand the identical piece of paper he had given him. The lad was warmly welcomed. Burr took him into his family, educated him, and procured him instruction in the art which nature had indicated should be the occupation of his life-time. Afterward, Burr assisted him to Europe, where he spent five years in the study of painting, and became an artist worthy of the name.

While Burr himself was wandering in Europe, Vanderlyn was exhibiting pictures in the Louvre, at Paris, and receiving from Napoleon a gold medal, besides compliments and felicitations from the emperor's own lips. Vanderlyn did all he could for his benefactor in Paris; but unhappily he had the successful artist's usual fortune — poverty embittered by glory. He afterward had commissions from Congress, and painted the well-known "Landing of Columbus" for a panel in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington. He also painted the portraits of Colonel Burr and Theodosia from which the engravings were taken by which their lineaments are now known to the public. Vanderlyn died only five years ago at Kingston, near the spot where he drew the charcoal sketch which decided his career.

Burr was fond of children to weakness. In walking about the Battery or the Park, which in those days used to swarm with nurses and children, he would often stop to speak to a pretty child. He has frequently emptied his pockets of all the change he had in giving pieces of money to the children and their attendants. In his office, he made a point of always keeping a supply of small coins expressly for children. A lady tells me that she has known him to send out a ten dollar

bill and get it all changed into five, six, ten, and twelve cent pieces, in order that he might be sure to have one to give her every time she said her lesson with the required degree of accuracy. Particularly fond of educating girls, he was far in advance of his time in the liberality of his ideas on that subject. His maxim was, that the aptitudes given by nature to each child should be cultivated without regard to sex. Accordingly, he had one of his female protégés, who exhibited a talent for music, taught the violin, both because it is the most perfect of instruments, and because the girl showed a remarkable fondness for it. Another girl acquired under his teaching a sufficient knowledge of Greek to read the New Testament in that language with some fluency.

Yet it appears he had a horror of hearing women talk upon politics, and would never permit the topic to be introduced in their presence, if he could prevent it.

"That man," said he one day of a stranger who had just left the room, "is no gentleman."

"Why not?" exclaimed the ladies in a chorus.

"Because he introduced politics before ladies," answered Burr.

"But, colonel, have ladies no sense, then?" inquired one of them.

With a smile, he said in his soft whispering way, "*All* sense, madame; yet it is better to talk sweet little nothings to them."

His female protégés usually became agreeable and estimable women, and did well in life. The young men whom he educated were too apt to copy his faults, instead of his virtues; particularly his worst fault, which was a reckless generosity in the use of money. Some of them passed their lives in pecuniary difficulties, which a little self-denying prudence in the beginning of their career might have enabled them to avoid. Others, however, escaped those degrading miseries, and are at this moment prosperous gentlemen. One of these I addressed in the following manner:

"You were intimately associated with Colonel Burr during the years when your character was forming, and he must have

influenced you powerfully. Looking back a quarter of a century, do you think he influenced you beneficially?"

"I am sure he did," was the reply.

"What particular effect did his character produce upon yours?" I asked.

The emphatic reply was: "*He made me iron!*"

A lady said to me: "I never ask and never answer an impertinent question; I was brought up in the *Burr school.*"

There are some pleasant recollections of Colonel Burr recorded in a recent work, entitled "The Autobiography of a Blind Minister," by the Rev. Timothy Woodbridge, D. D., a grandson of Jonathan Edwards, and one of Burr's cousins. "In the summer of 1819," says Dr. Woodbridge, "I met my cousin Aaron Burr, at the house of our common uncle, Hon. Timothy Edwards, in Stockbridge. This was the first time he had visited our uncle, for whom he had a profound reverence, since his return from Europe.

"Burr is a conspicuous character in American history; and, as I felt the most intense curiosity to make his acquaintance, and study his mind, I had several interviews with him during this visit of two or three days. His conversation was instructive and fascinating, and, joined to his bearing, conveyed to my mind the impression that he was made by the God of Nature to put forth a commanding agency in human affairs. His language was clear as light. His conversation was sententious and condensed, and I never knew a man convey as much meaning in as few words. I heard him sketch the character of a number of our revolutionary patriots and heroes in a wonderfully graphic manner, and I thought him a great moral painter.

"My uncle told me that, after Burr came home from his Canadian campaign, he described to him the character of Benedict Arnold. 'Arnold,' said Burr, 'is a perfect madman in the excitement of battle, and is ready for any deeds of valor; but he has not a particle of moral courage. He is utterly unprincipled, and has no love of country or self-respect, to guide him. He is not to be trusted anywhere but under the eye of a superior officer.'

"The day after Burr left our uncle's I called at the house, to talk over the impressions of this unwonted visit. My aunt was a venerable and pious woman. 'I want to tell you, cousin,' said she, 'the scene I passed through this morning. When Colonel Burr's carriage had driven up to the door, I asked him to go with me into the north room, and I can not tell you how anxious I felt, as I, an old woman, went through the hall with that great man, Colonel Burr, to admonish him, and to lead him to repentance. After we were by ourselves, I said to him, "Colonel Burr, I have a thousand tender memories associated with you. I took care of you in your childhood, and I feel the deepest concern over your erring steps. You have committed a great many sins against God, and you killed that great and good man, General Hamilton. I beseech you to repent, and fly to the blood and righteousness of the Redeemer for pardon. I can not bear to think of your being lost, and I often pray most earnestly for your salvation." The only reply he made to me,' continued the excellent old lady, 'was, "O, aunt, don't feel so badly; we shall both meet in heaven yet; meanwhile, may God bless you." He then tenderly took my hand, and left the house.'"

He often received, in the course of his life, similar well-meant admonitions, and invariably replied to them with thankfulness and respect. Letters, anonymous and other, reminding him of his mother's dying wishes respecting him, and urging him to repent, were found among his papers. One of these, written by a lady who had known and loved his mother, was eloquent and touching. She inclosed a fragment of a letter which she had received from his mother *sixty* years before, in which the most ardent desires were expressed for the spiritual welfare of her infant son. "I have often reflected," continued the lady, "on your trials, and the fortitude with which you have sustained them, with astonishment. Yours has been no common lot. But you seem to have forgotten the right use of adversity. Afflictions from heaven 'are angels sent on embassies of love.' We must improve, and not abuse them, to obtain the blessing. They are commissioned to stem the tide of impetuous passion; to check inordinate ambition; to

show us the insignificance of earthly greatness; to wean our affections from transitory things, and elevate them to those realities which are ever blooming at the right hand of God. When affliction is thus sanctified, 'the heart at once it humbles and exalts.'

"Was it philosophy that supported you in your trials? There is an hour approaching when philosophy will fail, and all human science will desert you. What then will be your substitute? Tell me, Colonel Burr, or rather answer it to your own heart, when the pale messenger appears, how will you meet him — 'undamped by doubts, undarkened by despair?'

"The inclosed is calculated to excite mingled sensations both of a melancholy and pleasing nature. The hand that penned it is now among 'the just made perfect.' Your mother had given you up by faith. Have you ever ratified the vows she made in your behalf? When she bade you a long farewell, she commended you to the protection of Him who had promised to be a Father to the fatherless.

"The great Augustine, in his early years, was an infidel in his principles, and a libertine in his conduct, which his pious mother deplored with bitter weeping. But she was told by her friends that 'the child of so many prayers and tears could not be lost;' and it was verified to her happy experience, for he afterward became one of the grand luminaries of the church of Christ. This remark has often been applied to you; and I trust you will yet have the happiness to find that 'the prayers of the righteous' have 'availed much.'"

Burr was no scoffer. He was desirous, while condemning the severe theology of his fathers, not to be thought an unbeliever. A lady informs me that if he chanced to enter a room while she was hearing her children say their prayers, he would stand silent in an attitude of reverence till the exercise was done. He occasionally went, with a lady, to the Episcopal church, and would have gone oftener but for his impatience of a dull or denunciatory sermon. As he was coming out of St. John's one fine Sunday afternoon, his companion asked him what he thought of the sermon, which had borne hard upon

erring mortals. "I think," said he, "that God is a great deal better than people suppose. I, at least, am a believer in his goodness. I say with Pope:

> "'Submit; in this or any other sphere,
> Secure to be as blessed as thou canst bear:
> Safe in the hand of one disposing Power,
> Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.'"

He thought the Bible to be by far the most valuable of books, and admired the Psalms of David particularly. On being asked to name his favorite authors in the order in which he esteemed them, he replied: "The Bible, of course, it is *the* Book; after that, Shakespeare, Burns, Pope. He had little relish, in his later years, for the French authors who had pleased him so much in his youth. He used to say of Rousseau that he was well named "a self-torturing egotist." He also outgrew any fondness he may have had for Voltaire. Of his ancestor, Jonathan Edwards, he used often to say that he "was the clearest head of America. How the race has degenerated," he would say, with a humorous shrug.

As the years passed, his reputation was more and more blackened by the idle, calumnious tales that were circulated respecting him. He bore it with surprising equanimity. Knowing well the utter hopelessness of attempting to restore his good name, he submitted to the wrong in silence, and grew at last almost indifferent to it. For many years, indeed, he cherished the hope that the publication of his story, after his death, would set all right at last, and to secure this was one of his latest cares. But for his own life-time he knew the case was hopeless.

"I don't care *what* they say of me," he said to one who showed him a scurrilous paragraph; "they may say whatever they please; I let them alone, I only ask to be let alone."

On a similar occasion, a lady said to him, "Why, colonel, if they were to accuse you of murder, I don't think you'd deny it."

He replied, "O, no, my child, why should I? What good would it do? Every man likes his own opinion best. He may

not have a hundred thousand dollars, but he has his opinion. A man's opinion is his pride, his wealth, himself. As far as I am concerned, they may indulge in any opinion they choose."

One day in his office, a gentleman talked in the usual half-true manner of the evils of war. Burr remarked,

"Slander has slain more than the sword."

To a friend who censured him for allowing so many hundreds of injurious paragraphs to circulate without contradiction, he replied that he had formerly supposed that his character was strong enough to bear such petty assaults, and he had felt himself safe in treating them with contempt. "But," he added, "I fear I have committed a great error; the men who knew their falsity are mostly dead, and the generation who now read them may take them for truths, being uncontradicted. I admit I have committed a capital error, but it is too late to repair it."

"Poor Burr!" exclaimed the recorder of the remark last quoted, "he was a man of many griefs; but he was a child of genius — a brave, intellectual, brilliant man — and had within himself many of the noblest qualities which adorn his species. But he had his weaknesses, and his petty vices in addition. Who has not? He was the victim of a combination of circumstances, rather than of his own fault."

Occasionally, Burr's revilers would receive a telling rebuke. One of his English friends, a colonel in the British army, came to this country with his wife and daughters, and hastened to renew his acquaintance with Colonel Burr. A few days after his arrival, some officious individuals to whom he had brought letters, and who had seen Burr walking in the street with him and his party, felt themselves called upon to put the stranger on his guard.

"Really, Colonel ——, you mustn't know Burr," said one of these friendly provincials. "No one in society thinks of knowing Burr; he is held in a kind of abhorrence. I wouldn't for the world have my wife and daughters seen speaking with him."

"Wouldn't you," said the jolly Briton; "for our part, we think Colonel Burr's acquaintance a privilege and an honor."

"But," said another of the officious ones, "Aaron Burr is the greatest villain on earth."

"Gentlemen," was the soldier's quiet reply, "we *like* villains," and turned on his heel.

Burr himself was provoked once to notice a public affront. It was at Jamaica, on Long Island, when he was a very old man, on one of the last occasions of his appearing in a court-room. The news of his coming preceded him, and such was the general desire to see so renowned a character, that the schools were dismissed, and people walked many miles to attend the court. A lawyer, fifty years his junior, thought to make capital for himself by roundly abusing Colonel Burr in his opening speech. On rising to reply, Colonel Burr, in his very blandest tones, said,

"I learned in the Revolution, in the society of gentlemen, and I have since observed for myself, that a man who is guilty of intentional bad manners, is capable of crime."

The remark is not a very striking one, but it is said to have produced a great effect upon the auditors, and to have completely quelled the young lawyer's insolence. The manner of the man must have been powerful in the extreme, for so many of his words to be remembered after the lapse of so many years.

One of Burr's law-partners relates an anecdote which also shows how his words cling to the memory of those who heard them. The circumstance occurred about forty-two years ago. A gentleman entered the office and brought the news that a friend of Colonel Burr's, who had at a critical period written a pamphlet in his vindication, had fallen dead in the street a few hours before.

"Do me the favor," said Burr, turning to his partner, "to send for a carriage; we must go and see how this is!"

On reaching the house, they found the family in great distress, and the sheriff in possession of the body for a debt of two hundred and fifty dollars.

Looking upon the face of the dead man, Burr said,

"This may be law, but it is not Christian charity!"

Turning to his partner, who was the cashier of the concern,

he added, "This must not go on. This man must be buried. You have the money of the privateersmen (clients) in your hands; pay the debt.

His prudent partner demurred, saying the money might be called for before they could replace it."

"Sir," replied Burr with decision, "that man once did me a kindness; give them the money and I will borrow as much to-morrow of the Black Prince."

The body was delivered, and both Burr and his partner attended the funeral. Black Prince was the nickname of one of Burr's staunch friends.

As he grew older, the habit of indiscriminate giving grew upon him to a most remarkable degree. During his more active years he usually had a partner who managed the financial affairs of the firm; for he was not fit himself to have the control of money, and he knew it. There were certain claims upon him which he could never resist. Old soldiers of the Revolution and their children, men who had lost by the failure of the expedition and their children, men who had stood by him to the last in his political career and their children, were the people who had but to apply to him for assistance, to get from him, if necessary, his last dollar. Literally, his last dollar; nay, his last cent; for he has been known to examine all his pockets and drawers, and bestow every coin he could find upon a needy friend.

When he received a sum of money of his own, he used to make a kind of well of books for its reception in the middle of his large, crowded table; and then lucky was the applicant who made the first claim upon it! He gave, and gave, and gave, until the well ran dry, and was filled in again with law papers and books; when, too often, a creditor would present himself, and go away again disappointed. "Burr was not a man," says one who knew more about his pecuniary affairs and habits than any body else, "to *worry* about a debt, though he liked to pay when he could." A creditor would say,

"This bill has been running a long time, colonel."

"It has indeed," he would reply.

"I should like to have the money," the creditor would continue.

"And I should like to pay you," the colonel would rejoin.

And if, when the applicant called again, there was money in the well, he *would* pay it with pleasure. Never was there a front door in New York so beset with solicitors for charity as his. To avoid the rush of suitors, he removed at one time to Jersey City, thinking that the obstacle of the river would, at least, diminish the crowd of applicants. He resided there for some years. These ceaseless gifts it was, that made him an extravagant man, and kept him poor. Upon himself he spent little. He lived chiefly upon fish, bread, weak coffee, claret and water, and other simple articles. He could scarcely have had a clerk whose personal expenses were so little as his own.

Heaps of miscellaneous pieces of paper from Burr's desks and drawers, have been offered to my inspection; they show how constantly he was solicited for pecuniary aid, and how frequently that aid was afforded. Notes payable to him that have never been paid; applications for small loans; acknowledgments of money borrowed; thanks for similar favors; fill up the interstices between larger documents. He *could* not say No, at last. He could scarcely choose *but* give.

An anecdote related to me by the wife of one of Burr's partners will serve to illustrate his *infirmity* with regard to the use of money. He may have been seventy-five years old when the circumstances took place. The lady chanced to be sitting in the office one morning, when Burr received a large amount of money in bills, and as his habits with regard to money had often been the subject of remark in the house, she watched his proceedings with curiosity. She saw him first take a law-book from an upper shelf, put a fifty dollar note between its leaves, and replace the book on the shelf. The rest of the money he deposited in the middle of his table, as usual. He had on that morning an extraordinary concourse of begging visitors, of whom no one seemed to go empty away, and by three o'clock in the afternoon the well was exhausted. An hour later, Colonel Burr looked at his watch,

sprang from his chair, and began hastily to pack his portmanteau with law-papers, in preparation for a journey to Albany, where he had business with the courts. When he was ready, he looked into his receptacle for money and *discovered* that it was empty. An examination of his pockets produced only a few coins.

"Bless me!" he exclaimed, "I have to go to Albany in half an hour, and have no money."

Could madame lend him ten dollars? Madame could not. Would madame oblige him by stepping over and asking her good mother to lend him the amount? Madame was of opinion that her good mother would not lend Colonel Burr any *more* money. He was at his wit's end. At length she said,

"But, colonel, what are you going to do with the fifty dollar bill in that book yonder?"

"O! I forgot," he said; "I put it there this morning on purpose. What a treasure you are to remind me of it!"

The year 1829 saw General Jackson President of the United States. He was not unmindful of his old friends of 1806. To Samuel Swartwout he gave the collectorship of New York. He could not do any thing openly for Colonel Burr, as his early connection with that terrible person had been one of the strong points made against him during the canvass. But he *did* grant him favors indirectly; he gave commissions and minor appointments to several of Burr's friends and protégés, at Burr's personal request. He also had a secret interview with Burr in New York when he made his first triumphal visit to the metropolis. At a later date, however, the general played his old confederate a sorry trick — as shall now be briefly related.

About the year 1828, an act of Congress was passed, providing for the relief and remuneration of certain revolutionary soldiers. Besides having received no pay for his services in the Revolution, Colonel Burr had expended considerable sums in aid of the cause, and, in fact, through his connection with the army, had lost the greater part of his inheritance. His accounts had never been settled. Old age was now upon him. He had a revolutionary pension of six hundred dollars a year,

and two annuities, yielding about fifteen hundred more; but with his habits and debts, this income was insufficient, and he had a dread of being a *poor* old man. He therefore prepared a statement of his expenditures during the Revolution, and made a claim, under the new act, for the sum, with interest, the amount being nearly one hundred thousand dollars. Before proceeding, he submitted his case to two or three of the first lawyers of New York and New Jersey, who pronounced his claim just, and within the provisions of the act. To make assurance doubly sure, he intrusted the business to a special agent, a gentleman who had studied law in his office, who spent some months in Washington urging the claim. From this gentleman I obtained the story.

The papers were duly presented to the Secretary, who soon rejected the claim on the ground that the applicant had not served to the end of the war, as the act required. Not disheartened, he asked time to show that, though he had resigned before the end of the war, yet he had done service, at General Washington's request, after his resignation, and had served as long as there were actual hostilities in the States where his regiment was stationed. His illness, too, in consequence of his exertions at Monmouth, had alone caused his resignation. New evidence was obtained, to which Burr added a masterly argument, and the case was again laid before the department. "*Res adjudicatur*," was the prompt reply of a new Secretary. The agent succeeded, however, in inducing the official to admit further argument, and the case reposed for awhile in the departmental pigeon-holes.

Burr now brought his peculiar tactics to bear. In answer to inquiries, he learned that the Secretary had two daughters, one of whom was sought in marriage by a young lawyer who held an appointment in one of the government offices. Retain *him*, wrote Burr, and offer him ten thousand dollars to get the claim allowed. This was done. The case having now a powerful friend at court, made evident progress in the Secretary's good opinion, and, in all probability, the money would have been obtained, but for a most unlooked-for occurrence. As the Secretary entered the President's room at the White

House, one morning, he was greeted by General Jackson with the following observations:

"Mr. ——," roared the general, "I understand that Colonel Burr has an application before your department. Don't have any thing to do with it, sir. There's rascality in it, sir."

Nothing remained for the luckless agent but to pay his hotel bill and go home. On hearing the issue of the business, Burr expressed no resentment whatever against the general, attributing his interference solely to the supposed necessities of his political position. Among those who did what they could to promote Colonel Burr's just claim on this occasion, were members of the celebrated Biddle family of Pennsylvania, whose early fortunes he had taken great interest in advancing.

"Jackson," Colonel Burr would say, "possesses all the attributes of a President fit to rule such a people. He is a man of an iron will — a will of pure well-wrought iron — no base *cast* metal."

"Is he a scholar?" some one asked.

"It is not necessary," replied Burr, "for the President of the United States to be a scholar. Andrew Jackson does not rule by books; he is a man of sound sense, and rules by will."

Jackson's famous oath, "By the Eternal," was a by-word in Burr's house long before it became familiar to the public. He afterward changed it to "By General Jackson," and so swore many a time; for, with all his good temper, he needed, and always had by him, a convenient expletive or two.

A cheerful, active, hale old man was Aaron Burr; none more so ever lived on this crowded, busy island. Young men, spirited women, new books, new events, new inventions, pleasant excursions, and rare adventures, he enjoyed, and keenly enjoyed, down to the seventy-ninth year of his age. He loved an open, blazing fire, and all open, bright, pleasant things, and, in all companies, was the animating spirit.

At the age of seventy-eight, we find him writing as follows to his partner from Albany: "Arrived this evening between six and seven o'clock, having been *forty-five* hours in the stage

without intermission, except to eat a hearty meal. Stages in very bad order — roads excellent for wheels to Peekskill, and thence very good sleighing to this city. The night was uncomfortable; the curtains torn and flying all about, so that we had plenty of fresh air. The term was closed this day. Nelson will hold the special court to-morrow morning — have seen both Wendell and O'Connor this evening — all ready — came neither fatigued nor sleepy."

A clipping from a New York newspaper of some years ago gives us a glimpse of the polite old man, as he looked to the large eyes of an imaginative boy:

"Just round the corner (from Broadway) in Reade-street — we believe on ground now occupied by Stewart's — was the office, for many of the later years of his life tenanted by Aaron Burr. We, when a boy, remember seeing him there, often. It was a dark, smoky, obscure sort of a double-room, typical of his fortunes. Burr had entirely lost caste for thirty years before he died. And whatever may be said of his character and conduct, we think nothing can excuse the craven meanness of the many, who, having fawned around him in the days of his elevation, deserted and reviled him in the after-time of misfortunes. Burr had much of the bad man in him (faith! we'd like to see the human mold that has not), but he was dauntless, intellectual, and possessed the warm temperament of an artist.

"Yes, we remember well that dry, bent, brown-faced little old man, polite as Chesterfield himself, that used to sit by an ancient baize table, in the half-light of the dust-covered room there — not often with work to do — indeed he generally seemed meditating. We can *now* understand it all, though he seemed a strange personage then. What thoughts must have burned and whirled through that old man's brain — *he*, who came within a vote or two of seating himself as a successor of Washington! Even to our boyish judgment then, he was invested with the dignity of a historic theme. He had all the air of a gentleman of the old school — was respectful, self-possessed, and bland, but never familiar. He had seen a

hundred men, morally as unscrupulous as himself, more lucky, for some reason or other, than himself. He was *down;* he was old. He awaited his fate with Spartan calmness — knowing that not a tear would fall when he should be put under the sod."

A little adventure which he had in one of these last years will serve to show how completely he retained the youthful spring of his spirits and muscles to an age when old men generally are willing prisoners of the arm-chair and chimney-corner. He was still living at Jersey City when Fanny Kemble and her father played their first engagement in New York. They created, as many will remember, a "sensation," and the newspapers teemed with articles laudatory of their acting. Burr, who took a lively interest in all that was passing, went to see them perform in the play of the Hunchback, accompanied by a young gentleman, a student of law, to whom I am indebted for the story. At that period, the ferry-boats stopped running soon after dark, and Burr engaged some boatman to be in waiting at the dock to row them back to Jersey after the play was over.

The theater was densely crowded. It was whispered about that Aaron Burr was present, and he was soon the target of a thousand eagerly curious eyes; but no one saluted the man who was "severed from the human race." He sat out the play, admired the acting of Miss Kemble, remarking, among other things, that she "was a fine animal." Meanwhile the weather had changed, and by the time they reached their boat, an exceedingly violent storm of wind and rain was raging, and it was very dark. The waves dashed against the wharf in a manner that was not at all inviting to the younger of the two adventurers, who advised Burr not to cross.

"Why!" exclaimed the old gentleman, as he sprang lightly into the boat, "you are not afraid of a little salt water, are you? This makes an adventure of it. This is the fun of the thing. The adventure is the best of it all."

His companion embarked, and they pushed off. The waves broke over the boat, and drenched them both to the skin in the

first five minutes. On they went, against wind, waves, and tide, and, after an hour's hard rowing, Burr all the while in hilarious spirits, they reached the shore.

Such a tough, merry, indomitable old man was Aaron Burr on the verge of fourscore!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

HIS RELATIONS WITH WOMEN.

"They Say"—Anecdote of Wilberforce—The Errors of M. L. Davis—The Two Wills of Colonel Burr—Anecdotes—Letter of Colonel Burr to a Young Lady—The Age of Gallantry—His Influence over Ladies—His Manners—Causes of his Bad Reputation with Regard to Women—Adventures on the Cold Friday—Other Anecdotes—Burr no Seducer.

One morning, near the close of his life, as he lay upon his bed prostrate with paralysis, a lady said to him in a bantering way:

"Colonel, I wonder, now, if you ever *were* the gay Lothario they say you were?"

The old man turned his eyes, the luster of which was undiminished still, toward the friend who made the remark, and lifting his trembling finger, said in his quiet, impressive whisper, which still lingers in her ears, and which brought tears to her eyes, twenty years after, as she repeated the words:

"They say! *they say!* THEY SAY! Ah, my child, how long are you going to continue to use those dreadful words? Those two little words have done more harm than all others. Never use them, my dear. *Never* use them!"

Wonderful, past all imagining, are the slanderer's triumphs in this good gossip-loving world. Where is the D'Israeli who will glean from history and literature such a startling book-full of the Curiosities and Tragedies of Calumny, as shall teach us all never more to believe ill of one another, except upon evidence which leaves no rational ground for doubt — a book that shall deal the death-blow to that fell destroyer of reputations, They say?

Almost as I write, this parapraph afloat just now in the newspapers, catches my eye: "Wilberforce relates that at

one time he found himself chronicled as 'St. Wilberforce,' in an opposing journal, and the following given as 'an instance of his Pharisaism:' 'He was lately seen,' says the journal, 'walking up and down in the Bath Pump Room, reading his prayers, like his predecessors of old, who prayed in the corners of the streets, to be seen of men.' 'As there is generally,' says Mr. Wilberforce, 'some slight circumstance which perverseness turns into a charge of reproach, I began to reflect, and soon found the occasion of the calumny. It was this — I was walking in the Pump Room, in conversation with a friend — a passage was quoted from Horace, the accuracy of which was questioned, and as I had a Horace in my pocket, I took it out and read the words. This was the plain 'bit of wire' which factious malignity sharpened into a pin to pierce my reputation.' How many ugly *pins* have been manufactured out of even smaller bits of wire than even that?"

Ay, indeed! and not "pins" merely, but darts, barbed and poisoned, that torture, rankle, and kill!

Here, perhaps, as conveniently as anywhere, may be said the little that *must* be said respecting the gallantries of Colonel Burr; a subject difficult to treat aright, impossible to avoid. Notorious in his life-time for his amours, and made doubly infamous since his death by the statements of a biographer, Aaron Burr is now universally regarded as the greatest monster of licentiousness that ever lived in the United States. It is no wonder that he is so regarded. On a subject so interesting to the imagination as illicit love, people always exaggerate. And writers seem to think that the popular way of treating it is to overstate a brother's delinquencies, and shed torrents of virtuous indignation over them. That is not the course which is going to be pursued on the present occasion. As I have ascertained the *truth* respecting this matter, and all the truth, the truth shall be told, and told with the addition of every palliating circumstance that fairly belongs to it. The task of throwing stones at the sinner shall be left to those who feel themselves to be without sin.

First, shall be stated what is *not* true respecting Burr's relations with women. Secondly, what *is* true.

Mr. Matthew L. Davis, to whom Colonel Burr left his papers and correspondence, and the care of his fame, prefaces his work with a statement that has, for twenty years, closed the ears of his countrymen against every word that may have been uttered in Burr's praise or vindication. The material part of that statement is the following passage: "Among the papers left in my possession by the late Colonel Burr, there was a mass of letters and copies of letters written or received by him, from time to time, during a long life, indicating no very strict morality in some of his female correspondents. These letters contained matter that would have wounded the feelings of families more extensively than could be imagined. Their publication would have had a most injurious tendency, and created heart-burnings that nothing but time could have cured. As soon as they came under my control I mentioned the subject to Colonel Burr; but he prohibited the destruction of any part of them during his life-time. I separated them, however, from other letters in my possession, and placed them in a situation that made their publication next to impossible, whatever might have been my own fate. As soon as Colonel Burr's decease was known, with my own hands I committed to the fire all such correspondence, and not a vestige of it now remains."

The impression left upon a reader's mind is, that Aaron Burr was indifferent to the fate of such letters; a circumstance which would suffice to damn to eternal infamy the memory of any man. But, fortunately, the means exist of proving that Burr expressly provided for their destruction, and *laid upon Mr. Davis a solemn injunction to that effect!*

Twice in his life, Aaron Burr, in view of threatened or of approaching death, made his will. By the first will, dated on the eve of the duel with Hamilton, he consigned his papers to his daughter's care, and, in his farewell letter to her, gave her a special charge concerning them. He told her to "burn all such as, if by accident made public, would injure any person. This," he adds, "is *more particularly applicable to the letters of my female correspondents.*" In 1834, when he was seventy-nine years of age, he made another will, in which he left his papers to Matthew L. Davis, to be used according to his dis-

cretion. To this will, a few months before his death, he added a codicil which contains the following words: "I direct that all my private papers, except law papers appertaining to suits now defending, be delivered to my friend Matthew L. Davis, Esq., to be disposed of at his discretion, DIRECTING *him, nevertheless, to destroy, or to deliver to parties interested, all such as may, in his estimation, be calculated to affect injuriously the feelings of individuals against whom I have no complaint.*" Of this will Mr. Davis was an executor. How he could have brought himself to omit all mention of the injunctions just quoted, and to assume to himself alone the virtue of destroying the papers, is something inexplicable.

His statement is objectionable, too, from its indefiniteness. He speaks of "a *mass* of letters and copies of letters." On a subject like this, to be vague is to exaggerate. How easy to have given the dimensions of the "mass" or the number of the letters. Every one knows how soon an ordinary correspondence, if all the letters are preserved, presents an imposing "mass" of spoiled writing paper. And it is to be further observed, that a man may have a very warm correspondence with a lady, may make and receive protestations of attachment, without incurring or intending guilt. Granting that this "mass" of letters was of mountainous bulk, it is still no proof of a corresponding criminality.

"Not a vestige of it now remains," adds Mr. Davis, explicitly and positively. That this, too, is an error, I am in a position to prove. After the work of Mr. Davis had been published for some time, he not only had a packet of these letters in his possession, but lent them to an acquaintance to read. The acquaintance referred to is a gentleman eminent in character and in station, and one whose word it would be insulting the community which honors him to doubt. He has himself assured me of the facts. Mr. Davis told him he had found this packet after the solemn burning related in his preface, and, tossing it upon his friend's desk, gave him permission to read the letters. His friend did read a few of them. Some of the letters were evidently the production of illiterate women; but some, written in the French language, were

extremely elegant, both in composition and in sentiment. Nothing particular is recollected of their contents, except that they appeared to be letters of gallantry — as well they might seem to one who carelessly looked over them with a previous impression that they were such. Other evidence that the letters were not all destroyed opportunely reaches me. In Harper's Magazine for July, 1857, the following story derived from the recollections of the late Hon. John Barney, of Maryland, is repeated. Besides showing that the letters (one of them at least) were retained and *used*, it shows the cruel injury which Mr. Davis's preface has done to Col. Burr's memory:

"There never," begins the story in Harper, "was a greater villain than Aaron Burr — never! What is written of him — what has become history and world talk — is nothing to the unwritten, untold deeds of darkness that he was ever perpetrating. His whole life was intrigue. Woman was his spoil. He lived before the world as an aspirant for power: in social life he lived to triumph over the weakness of the sex. His treachery, his infamous exposure of confidential letters addressed to him by ladies of rank and fashion, his utter heartlessness are now well known; but the chapters of his love affairs, if published, will make the most extraordinary revelations that have ever yet appeared in connection with the name of this remarkable man.

"The late honest, but poor Matthew L. Davis, his executor, received from him, while living, trunks full of feminine correspondence, by which Burr sought to make Davis's fortune, but which were generously returned, without fee or reward, to the grateful recipients.

"Lobbying — now an anomaly — was then in full force. Several important bills had passed the New York Legislature, and some were so uncharitable as to intimate that improper influences had been resorted to. Davis was accused of being engaged in bringing about a successful result.

"A lady of rank and fashion condescended — and ladies rarely condescend to mingle in any thing out of their appropriate sphere, the limits of the domestic circle — to say hard

things of Davis; she went so far as to intimate she could calmly look on and see him hung. Davis went to her door, rang the bell, sent up his name, and was promptly answered she was not, and never would be at home to Mr. Davis.

"'Pray ask her if she has heard from her husband at Niagara?'

"He was forthwith invited up stairs. The lady entered in trepidation and alarm.

"'Has any calamity happened to my beloved husband?' said she.

"'This will explain all,' said Davis, handing her a letter in her own chirography, addressed to Colonel Aaron Burr.

"'Good heavens, sir!' said she; 'for what purpose is this letter destined to remain in your possession?'

"'Madam, to be disposed of by you, at your own discretion,' was the reply.

"'My kind friend,' exclaimed she, 'how can I ever repay such an act of unparalleled magnanimity? I, who have spoken so unkindly, so unjustly, of so noble a friend!'

"'Ever afterward,' said Davis, 'she almost broke her neck in extending her head out of the carriage window to greet me as she passed.'"

The lady had reason to be alarmed, though her letter might have been innocent, for, owing to calumnies and exaggerations, circulating uncontradicted for half a century, Burr's reputation at length was such as to cast a shade of suspicion over every woman who had ever been acquainted with him!

Further. Burr's surviving friends, connections, and near acquaintances, however they may differ in minor particulars, all agree in asserting these two things: first, that Burr *never* compromised a woman's name, nor spoke lightly of a woman's virtue, nor boasted of, nor *mentioned* any favors he may have received from a woman; secondly, that of all the men they have ever known, *he* was the man *least* capable of such unutterable meanness! No particulars of any affair of gallantry in which he may have been engaged could ever be extracted from him. He never talked of them.

"Tell me, colonel," said a young friend to him a year or

two before his death, "tell me some of your pretty love adventures."

A smile stole over his face (for the old man had a strange liking to be accused of such things) as he said, shaking his old head:

"No, no; I never kiss and tell."

This was his way, when asked such questions.

Another little scene has been reported to me to illustrate his manner on such occasions. He was lying on a couch. A friend who was arranging his table said to him suddenly.

"Ah! colonel, what is this? Here is a love-lock."

He looked at it, smiled and nodded, took it into his hands and smoothed it with his fingers, but said nothing.

"Whose hair is that, colonel?" asked the friend.

Still fondling it with his fingers he said, smiling, as though his recollections of the head from which he may have cut it, were very pleasant.

"It is very pretty hair."

"I see it is," said the curious lady, "but whose hair is it?"

"It is a lady's hair," he replied.

"I perceive that," said she, with humorous pertinacity, "but I want to know *whose* hair it is."

"Undoubtedly," said he, with some gravity.

"But, colonel," she continued, "I have really a strong desire to know whose hair that was."

"I see you have," was all the reply she could extract from him.

She still persisting, he at length made a reply in such a tone and manner as to preclude all continuance of the conversation, though he spoke with the utmost gentleness.

"Madame," said he, "it was a lady who was once under my protection; and a woman who has ever been in these arms is sacred to me forever."

And yet further. Before Mr. Davis received any of Burr's letters or papers, they were carefully examined by two persons, one of them a male relative of Colonel Burr's, and the other a lady who had an especial and honorable motive for examining every one of them — particularly those addressed to

and received from women. One of these persons still lives; her positive and circumstantial testimony, added to that already given, enables me to assert, what I now do assert, that Mr. Davis was utterly mistaken as to the character of the letters to which he alludes. *He received no letters necessarily criminating ladies!* There are persons to whom every act of gallant attention looks like an invitation to love. They can not conceive of affection between the sexes free from passion. They know very well what turn *they* would give to such attachments, if they possessed the power to charm and win the fair, and it is but natural they should misinterpret the gallantries of others. One of the very reasons given by Mr. Davis why he was the man to be intrusted with delicate correspondence was, that his own life being notoriously incorrect, he could not judge harshly another's sins. And in the act of making this avowal, he committed, in the most flagrant manner, the very offense with which his preface charges Colonel Burr. These are facts. It seems fit that they should be stated.

As illustrating Burr's manner toward women, I will here insert a single letter taken from the "mass" of his papers, *before* they fell under the scrutiny of Mr. Davis. I am assured that it is a fair specimen. Written in his seventy-fourth year, in the neatest, daintiest hand, as legible as print, without a blur or erasure, and couched in the language of elegant compliment which gentlemen used in that day whenever they addressed ladies, it is a perfect thing of its kind. It was addressed to a young lady, and explains itself:

"I have this day heard with concern and astonishment that a trifling note, written some days ago, has been the cause of very serious displeasure — it was hastily written, never copied, perhaps not even perused, and the particular terms of it are not recollected. If, however, it contains any other sentiments than those of respect and attachment, they are foreign to my heart.

"That great affection which I bore your father had been transferred to his child — to you I fear the greater portion — yet I had known you only as a child — a child indeed of great promise — and I was impatient to see you as a woman. I did

see you. The tone and cadence of your voice, your language, every movement, every expression, denoted a superiority which charmed me. I was overjoyed to find my friend so faithfully represented in his daughter. I wished to testify my satisfaction, and having frequently called without seeing you, the object of the note was to express my admiration, which appeared to me a tribute of simple justice, and to tender my services to escort you — to walk — to view the town, its improvements and curiosities — in short, to put myself at your orders. It was done openly — this alone should have exonerated me from the suspicion of improper views. It was presumed that it would, and intended that it should, be read by the family, and I amused myself with imagining how much they would be pleased to see that, in the midst of so many vexatious and distressing circumstances, I could for a moment assume the air of playfulness and gayety. I had fancied, too, that you might be the subject of some little raillery, as having excited this spark of momentary animation.

"It is highly probable that this note may have been written in a style of familiarity not warranted, I acknowledge, by any personal acquaintance, but permitted, I thought, or rather felt, for I thought not, by my friendship with your father. But this, perhaps, was an error, for you could have no sympathy with that sentiment, nor knowledge of it, but by cold tradition. Yet, if you can call to mind how you have ever felt in meeting the child of a very dear departed friend, you will cease to censure my presumption.

"But whatever may have been the levity of the note, I may at least claim the privilege of age. At my time of life, one may trifle, if not with impunity, certainly without exciting alarm, and it would imply, in me, a profound ignorance of the world to mistake you for an object of gallantry, and a most ridiculous vanity to presume that I could be a fit pretender to favor.

"A note written with impressions so harmless, and, if my opinion had been of any value, I would have said, so flattering, must have been construed with more than monastic rigor to have received so unkind a sentence. I hope and believe that

at some future period you will recollect it with less severity, and that you will then acknowledge without a blush and without a frown, the purity and the delicacy of that attachment which you now so harshly repel.

"P. S.—Having read this, I am not satisfied with it, nor do I know how better to apologize — but I am unhappy under your displeasure. If you be not altogether inexorable, I would ask, as an evidence of your forgiveness, a surrender of the offensive note."

The letter produced its designed effect. The lady, in spite of the remonstrances of those who surrounded her, would know her father's friend. She lives to declare that from Colonel Burr she received only the most delicate attentions and friendly offices. Having imbibed his ideas of the value of public opinion, being now, an honored wife and mother, and these events being known to none living beyond her own circle, she has no motive for concealment, and is incapable of misrepresentation.

Among the letters which Mr. Davis received, there were enough to fill a volume which proved Burr's boundless generosity to women. There is, at this moment, in this city, a flourishing seminary, which has grown out of a small school which was started for two young ladies by him. He was so straitened at the time that, to procure the money necessary for the purchase of the desks and chairs, he was obliged to pawn his watch and sofa. The recipients of his bounty not unfrequently cherished an ardent attachment for his person, which they expressed in glowing letters. Soon after he returned from Europe, a lady who had known and loved him in better days, wrote him a long history of her fortunes during his absence. I will give the conclusion of this letter merely to show the manner in which a virtuous woman could write to him. She had been soliciting his aid for a relative, and thus proceeds:

"When I consider the miscreants that your goodness has raised, your bounty fed, I think it impossible that the power, which I am sure you would so joyfully exert, should be withheld of raising to distinction one so deserving. Those de-

lightful hours of soul-felt intercourse might then again return, when, unbending from the severe duties of society, I was the soft green of the soul on which you loved to repose; and if, by enjoying, I can impart happiness so exquisite, my heart, my disposition, my feelings, my affections are still the same; glowing with the same warmth, animated with the same ardor.

"Had I been the wife of a prince or a king, I should have flown to you as soon as your arrival was announced, bongré malgré the royal permission. But you will readily conceive how much I am the soul of this establishment. So much so am I, that though the city lays before me as if it was painted on a map, I am often several months without going to it, and am very seldom absent an hour. In August I shall give a short vacation, and will fly anywhere to meet you, though even for a moment.

"You must expect, my dear friend, to see me somewhat changed. Not the *morale* — that is unalterable; but the *physique* has acquired a great accession of embonpoint, which, owing to my height, distributes itself pretty well, so that the proportions are not lost, but the scale considerably enlarged. But this, at the first interview, you will not perceive, nor any thing but a devoted creature irradiated with joy. O, I knew this hour would come. During your absence it was strongly impressed on my mind. In my dreams I have beheld you looking benignantly at me; and something whispered to my heart that at length the hour, with feeling fraught, would be given me; that again in your presence I should feel that unmixed delight which from you only I have received — the happiness attending the most pure, most ardent, most exalted friendship."

When such letters as these fall into the hands of a certain description of men, they receive but one interpretation.

Other passages of Mr. Davis's work require brief examination. "Major Burr," he says, "while yet in college, had acquired a reputation for gallantry. On this point he was excessively vain, and regardless of all those ties which ought to control an honorable mind. In his intercourse with females

he was an unprincipled flatterer, ever prepared to take advantage of their weakness, their credulity, or their confidence. She that confided in him was lost." And again: "It is truly surprising how any individual could have become so eminent as a soldier, as a statesman, and as a professional man, who devoted so much of his time to the other sex as was devoted by Colonel Burr. For more than half a century of his life they seemed to absorb his whole thoughts. His intrigues were without number. His conduct most licentious. The sacred bonds of friendship were unhesitatingly violated when they operated as barriers to the indulgence of his passions." "In this particular, Burr appears to have been unfeeling and heartless. And yet, by a fascinating power, almost peculiar to himself, he so managed as to retain the affection, in some instances, the devotion, of his deluded victims. In every other respect, he was kind and charitable. No man would go further to alleviate the sufferings of another. No man was more benevolent. No man would make greater sacrifices to promote the interest or the happiness of a friend."

One needs to be very slightly acquainted with the habits of Aaron Burr to know that the above must be, at least, a prodigious exaggeration. Not a line of this volume would ever have been written if I had not been perfectly convinced that it is much more than an exaggeration. Aaron Burr was the *busiest* man, perhaps, that ever lived. No lawyer ever prepared his cases with more untiring assiduity, and few lawyers have had more cases to prepare. He was a man who, no matter what assistance he had, saw to every thing himself. His affairs were always large and complicated; and his devotion to them was the wonder of his friends. That such a man, so occupied, should have even *seemed* to devote his whole mind, for fifty years, to the pursuit of the fair sex, is incredible; and the more so as the scene of his exploits was here in the United States, where women, as well from principle as from possessing the intelligence to calculate the consequences of violating it, are the most virtuous in the world. It is agreed among Burr's surviving friends and relatives, most of whom knew him better than Mr. Davis, that the passages quoted above convey

ideas ludicrously at variance with the truth. That he was, at all periods of his life, what we now call a moral man, no one asserts. But that he was any thing *like* the all-consuming, the continuous, the insatiable destroyer, which he has been represented, all unite in declaring, is manifestly and certainly untrue. Not less exaggerated were John Adams's statements respecting Alexander Hamilton, when he speaks of his "prostitutions of power for the purposes of sensual gratification;" of his "debaucheries in New York and Philadelphia;" of "his audacious and unblushing attempts upon ladies of the highest rank and purest virtue;" of "the indignation with which he has been spurned;" and of "the inquietude he has given to the first families." John Adams, an honest man, lived in intimacy with Hamilton for several years; yet few find it difficult to believe the above assertions to be monstrous exaggerations.

In those days, we should remember, gallantry was a practice *expected* of a Man of the World. There was going on everywhere in Christendom a breaking away from the severe creeds and strict morality of the ancient church; one of the surest, and one of the first results of which was, and is, license with regard to women. The young man delivered from the restraints of his youth, and from the latent, always operating terrors of religion, eagerly hastened to gratify a long accumulated curiosity, and to give proof of his emancipation. With the zeal of a new convert, and the keen appetite of young desire, he pursued forbidden pleasure, and boasted of more triumphs than he won. Mr. Lewes, in his Life of Goethe, writing of this period, says:

"Those were the days of gallantry; the days of

"'Puffs, paints, and patches, powders, billet-doux.'

The laxity of the German morals differed only from the more audacious licentiousness of France in having sentimentalism in lieu of gayety and luxuriousness for its basis. The heart of a French marquise was lost over a supper table sparkling with champaigne and *bon mots;* the heart of a

German Gräfin yielded more readily to moonlight melancholy and a copy of verses. Wit and audacity were the batteries for a French woman; the German was stormed with sonnets and a threat of suicide. For the one, Lothario needed sprightliness and *bon ton;* for the other, turbulent disgust at all social arrangements, expressed in interjectional rhetoric, and a deportment outrageous to all conventions. It is needless to add that marriage was, to a great extent, what Sophie Arnauld, with terrible wit, called 'the sacrament of adultery;' and that on the subject of the sexes, the whole tone of feeling was low. Poor, simple, earnest Schiller, whom no one will accuse of laxity, admired the *Liasons Dangereuses*, and saw no reason why women should not read it; although, to our age, the infamy of that book is so great as to stamp a brand upon the society which produced and applauded it. Yet even Schiller, who admired this book, was astounded at the condition of women at Weimar. 'There is hardly one of them,' he writes to Körner, 'who has not had a *liason*. They are all coquettes. One may very easily fall into an "affair of the heart," though it will not *last* any time.' It was thought, apparently, that since Eros had wings, he must use them and fly."

A state of things like this, it need not be said, has had no parallel in the United States. The brilliant skepticism of that age not only made no great progress among the people, but never pervaded the society of the country so far as to give the ruling tone to it. The society of America has been moral from the beginning. It is nevertheless true that among the wits, the more spirited young men of the colleges, the fine gentlemen who had traveled in Europe, the men of books and experiments, the more decided revolutionists and republicans, it was the fashion to admire Voltaire, and to avow the narrow skepticism of Paine. The young scholar-soldiers of the Revolution generally imbibed it; and, demoralized by a camp life, as camp-life then was, many of them became licentious in conduct. But even in this extreme liberal party, there was never more than an approach, *half affected*, half real, to the immorality of continental Europe. Gallantry was, indeed,

much in vogue with all parties. But morality was, also, the *rule* in all.

Aaron Burr, then, was a man of gallantry. He was *not* a debauchee; *not* a corrupter of virgin innocence; *not* a despoiler of honest households; *not* a betrayer of tender confidences. He was a man of gallantry. It is beyond question that, in the course of his long life, he had many intrigues with women, *some* of which (not many, there is good reason to believe) were carried to the point of criminality. The grosser forms of licentiousness he utterly abhorred; such as the seduction of innocence, the keeping of mistresses, the wallowing in the worse than beastliness of prostitution. Not every woman could attract him. He was the most delicate and fastidious of men. A woman of wit, vivacity, and grace, whether beautiful or not, whether an inhabitant of a mansion or a cottage, was the creature who alone, and who always, could captivate him. He was, as it were, a man of gallantry by nature. Every thing appertaining to the sex was peculiarly interesting to him. He doted on a neatly turned billet-doux. He thought highly of the minds of women; he prized their writings. The rational part of the opinions now advocated by the Woman's Rights Conventions, were his opinions fifty years before those Conventions began their useful and needed work. His beautiful picture of Mary Wolstoncroft* (by Opie) he preserved through all the vicissitudes of his life, and gave it away on his death-bed to his last and best friend, in whose possession it still remains.

It was impossible that he should have been addicted to gross sensual indulgencies. A man who is gross in one appetite, is generally gross in all. A man who, like Burr, is temperate in eating and drinking to the degree of abstemiousness, may not be strictly chaste, but he can not be a debauchee. A man who retains to the age of seventy-nine the vigor of manhood and the liveliness of a boy, can not, at any period of his life, have egregiously violated the laws of his being.

All accounts, written and verbal, agree in this, that he possessed an unequaled power of charming the ladies of his day.

* Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman.

His manner toward them soft, courteous, and winning, had also the peculiarity of stimulating them to display their powers and their charms to the best advantage. Witty women were wittiest when talking to him, and they had a flattering consciousness of the fact. He had the art of approaching a lady so, that, whatever gift or grace she most valued herself upon possessing, was called into agreeable exercise; and she felt that she was shining. His handsome face, too, his wonderfully brilliant black eyes, his extremely elegant figure, the careful correctness of his costume, the graceful loftiness of his demeanor, his absolute self-possession, his reputation for bravery and address, his unequaled readiness in complimentary repartee — all, of course, contributed to render him irresistible in the drawing-room — as the drawing-room then was.

And not in the drawing-room only. A foreign lady of distinction, with whom he was very intimate, told me that she never saw such an exhibition of graceful motion and delicate politeness in a man, as when, one evening in his office, he roasted some clams by his office fire, and presented them to her, one by one, on the shell. There was a cry of clams in the street, and the lady having remarked that, as long as she had been in America, she had never tasted those national shell-fish, Burr sent out for some, and, with the assistance of his office boy, roasted and served them with enchanting grace. The same lady informs me there were two things Colonel Burr could do better than any man in the world — *bow out* an obnoxious visitor, and hand a lady to her carriage. "I feel still," said she, "the soft touch of his little hand in mine, as he *glided* across the pavement."

To his own vanity Burr owed much of his reputation for enormous licentiousness. Men who have unusual power to please ladies, have usually the foible to be extremely proud of it. Byron was always boasting of his easy triumphs. Pierrepont Edwards, it is said, was so vain upon this point, that when unjustly charged with the parentage of a child, he could not find it in his heart to deny the soft impeachment, and would pay the sum demanded rather than lose the compliment. And Burr, who was prone to invest his innocent actions with

mystery, often, I am sure, assumed the air of a man who has a "little French girl" behind a book-case, when there was nothing but cobwebs there. He never would refuse to accept the parentage of a child.

"Why do you allow this woman to saddle you with her child, when you *know* you are not the father of it?" said a a friend to him, a few months before his death.

"Sir," he replied, "when a lady does me the honor to name me the father of her child, I trust I shall always be too gallant to show myself ungrateful for the favor!"

That very child, of which it was physically impossible he should have been the father, he claims in his will as his own and leaves it a legacy. At this day we can not understand, nor allow for, such a foible as this. But observe — neither Edwards nor Burr was ever known, in a single instance, *so* to vaunt their prowess as to compromise, in the slightest degree, the character of any woman. On *that* point my informants are explicit and unanimous.

His life-long habit of adopting and educating children, also, tended to increase his reputation for criminal gallantry. Seven persons in ten have no notion of the educational instinct which yearns to develop a natural gift or a noble character. "Why," asked the world, "does he keep that girl at school, or send that boy to college?" "They are his own children, of course," answers Scandal with smiling self-righteousness, nothing doubting. There was a period in the latter part of his life when he contributed to the support of ten women. In the most positive manner, by four individuals, each of whom stood nearer to Burr than Mr. Davis ever did, and one of whom had peculiar means of knowing, I am assured, that not *one* of these women had ever borne to him the relation which the charitable world would infer from the fact of his giving them money. "If," said one of these gentlemen to me, "Burr *had* been a man of gross appetite, he might easily have been the greatest debauchee that ever existed."

Nevertheless, in the mind of the moralist, Burr must stand condemned. Because his errors have been more overstated than those of any other man, he must not be exonerated from

the guilt of those which he did commit. He was guilty toward women — *he*, who should have inaugurated the new morality, the morality which is to convince mankind that liberality of opinion is *not* incompatible with rigorous, with ideal virtue!

How can we deplore enough the licentiousness of that age! It put back the emancipation of the human intellect for a hundred years! Superstition, this day, is living upon the vices of that brilliant, wicked period. How puzzled the wits and philosophers of the last century used to be, that their opinions made so little way with the average intellect of the people. As clear as the sun in the heavens seemed to them the truth of their system. They had on their side a majority of the brightest spirits of the time. Hume, Gibbon, Fox, Franklin, Jefferson, were great men in their day; and though dead they yet speak with a voice potential. Yet the ideas of which these men were the antagonists still rule the world. Doubtless, it is because license in conduct has so often accompanied liberality of thought; because the steady virtue which procures tranquillity of life and safe prosperity was chiefly to be found among those whom philosophers pitied as the "victims of superstition." Virtue is the power of this world. As long as the servant-girl strict at mass and confession is, as a general rule, a better servant and woman than one who is not, the Pope is safe on his throne. The opinions that triumph at last are those which produce noble characters, high morality, well-ordered lives.

A few anecdotes illustrative of Burr's relations with women may find place here, and close the chapter.

As an instance of his readiness, the following has been related. Soon after his return from Europe, he met in Broadway a maiden lady somewhat advanced in life, whom he had not seen for many years. He was passing her without recognition, when she said,

"Colonel, do you not recollect me?"

"I do not, madame," was his reply.

"I am Miss K., sir," said she.

"What!" he exclaimed, "Miss K. *yet?*"

"Yes, sir," replied the lady, a little offended, "Miss K. *yet.*"

Perceiving the error he had committed, he gently took her hand and, said, in his bland, emphatic manner, "Well, madame, then I venture to assert that it is not the fault of *my* sex!"

Returning one day, in about the seventieth year of his age, from a professional visit to Orange county, New York, he related, with evident delight, an adventure which he had had during his absence. I have the story from the lady to whom he told it first.

It was one of the "cold Fridays" of tradition, when the incident occurred. So cold was it that few living creatures could long support life exposed to the blast. The snow lay deep on the ground; the roads were imperfectly broken; the air was filled with particles of snow blown about by the wind. Colonel Burr had a ride of twenty miles before him that day, to attend a court which met on the day following. He had a companion with him, his partner in the law, a gentleman forty years his junior, who, after trying in vain to persuade him not to attempt the journey, refused, point blank, to accompany him. Burr consulted his man, and finding him willing to go, ordered round his sleigh, they set off about the middle of the day. As night drew on the roads became worse, and the cold increased to such a degree that to keep the blood in motion required laborious exertion. As the wind swept down from the mountains, even the horse shrunk from facing it, and gave signs of yielding to the cold. For himself Burr had no fears; no weather could subdue him; but his driver began to occasion him constant anxiety, as the drowsiness premonitory of the torpor that precedes freezing was coming over him. Finding that the drowsiness increased, he resolved at last to stop at the next house they came to. They were now in a thinly-settled country, which Burr had not seen since revolutionary times, when he had been much in the neighborhood with his regiment. About nine o'clock the light of a little cottage came in sight; to the door of which Burr's summons brought an old lady, who proved to be its only inhabitant.

"Is there hospitality here?" asked Burr; "we are nearly dead with cold."

"Come in," was the old lady's prompt reply, "you are welcome to the best I have."

In a few minutes he had his half-frozen servant by the side of a blazing fire, and his horse in the stable. While they were getting warm, the hostess prepared supper, to which, in due time, they were invited. Restored then to the use of his faculties, Burr looked about him and observed that, though every thing in the room was of an unpretending and inexpensive character, yet all was clean and nicely arranged. The only ornamental object was a plaster bust standing upon a little shelf. He had casually noticed this on entering the room, and looking now to ascertain which of the national favorites it was whom the old lady had selected to adorn her abode, he was astonished to discover that it was a bust of himself! Twenty years before, this would have been no unusual circumstance; but rare indeed was it then for him to be thus reminded of his former condition. More to amuse his servant than for any other reason, he said, as the old lady was putting away her dishes:

"What! have you got that vile traitor here?"

The woman paused in her work as he uttered these words. Her manner changed in a moment. Putting down some plates which she had in her hand, she walked slowly up to the fire where he was sitting, and standing before him, said with intense emphasis:

"Sir, I have taken you in, to-night, and have done the best I could for you: but if you say another word against Aaron Burr, I'll put you and your man out where you came from quicker than you came in."

He apologized, and, after a time, succeeded in regaining her good will. He did not tell her who he was, nor could he recollect her. He supposed that he must have known her in early life, when, as the youngest colonel in the army, and the protector of that county, he must have been a brilliant figure in the imagination of a country girl.

Ten years later, on one of the last journeys he ever made,

he found himself in the neighborhood of Fort Lee, on the Hudson, a few miles above New York. Before the door of a farm-house, he saw a very old woman knitting, and smoking a pipe, whom he thought he recognized as one of his revolutionary acquaintances. Recollecting the incident just related, he entered into conversation with her.

"Did you know," said he, "one Major Burr, or Aaron Burr, in the revolutionary war, hereabouts?"

"What!" said the old woman, "the Aaron Burr that afterward became such a great man? and a bad man, too, they say: tried to overturn the government, they tell me."

"Yes," replied Burr, "that's the man I mean."

"O, yes," said she, with a brightening face, "I remember him *well!*"

"Do you think you should know him again?" Burr asked.

"It's a long time ago," she replied, musing; and then, as a smile broke over her face, she added, "but I think I should know his black eyes."

"Well," said he, "I am the very person."

She looked at him intently. "*You* are Major Burr?" she exclaimed.

"I am, indeed," he said.

She saw that it was indeed the Major Burr of her youth who stood before her; changed as he was, his black eyes were as bright as they were then. She dropped her knitting and her pipe, rose to her feet, threw her arms around his neck, and hugged him long and close. She had not seen him for sixty years, but through all that long period she had cherished the recollection of his valor, courtesy, and tenderness. They sat down, side by side, these two relics of a former age, and talked of the olden time. She had much to tell him of the history of his former friends. She showed him some of the great grand-children of people he had known in the bloom of their youth.

The gentleman from whom I derived this anecdote, adds that, about the same time, he witnessed another remarkable meeting between Burr and ante-revolutionary friends. One of the first acts of hospitality Burr ever performed was

the entertaining of the late Major and Mrs. Popham at his house in Albany. They were, indeed, married at his house, and received from him important services. They were among those who never turned their backs upon him in the day of his misfortunes, though some years had now elapsed since they had seen him. Returning to New York from White Plains, in one of the late years of his life, Colonel Burr visited his old friends at their country seat. "The meeting between Mrs. Popham and Burr," says my informant, "was refined and touching in the extreme, and their whole intercourse was marked by the high-bred courtesy of the revolutionary period. No *bad* man could ever excite the feeling he did in the minds of such women, much less retain their friendship for half a century."

A lady said to Burr one day in his office,

"Come, colonel, no more mystery; tell me now what you really meant to do in Mexico."

He was not to be caught. "Oh," said he, in his light, pleasant manner, "I'd have made it a heaven for women; and if you had then been alone, you should have been there to enjoy it."

He had a great abhorrence of criminal intimacies with honest poor girls. A member of his own household was once seen to take a liberty with the person of a servant girl in his own house. It came to his ears. He expressed the strongest possible disgust. "A man," said he, "who will so much as *look* with lustful eyes upon a servant is no gentleman; and if he does it in the house of a friend, he dishonors that house and insults that friend."

Talking one day with a very intimate friend, respecting his own affairs of gallantry, he uttered these words: "I never had an amour in my life in which I was not met half way. I would be the last man on earth to make such advances where they were not welcome. Nor did I ever do, or say, or write any thing which threw a cloud over a woman's name." This was not said in the way of exculpation, for he never uttered a syllable of that nature. It was a casual remark, arising naturally from the conversation.

On another occasion, a few weeks before his death, in the course of a similar conversation, he said, "Seduction is a crime like no other. No woman can lay her ruin at my door. If I had a son, and he were to bring dishonor upon a family by ruining a daughter, I would shoot him as I would a dog!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

HIS SECOND MARRIAGE.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF STEPHEN JUMEL — MADAME JUMEL'S VISIT TO BURR — COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE — BURR MISUSES HER MONEY — THEIR SEPARATION.

BRIEFLY must this singular tale be told. Singular it is in the literal sense of the word; neither in history or in fiction can its parallel be found.

Stephen Jumel, one of those efficient, invincible Frenchmen, who redeem the character of their nation, emigrated at an early age to St. Domingo, where he worked his way to the ownership of a share in a coffee plantation. Warned by a faithful slave, he escaped from his house on the eve of the great massacre, and saw, from a wood to which he had fled, his buildings burned and his plantation laid waste. For many days, fed by his negro friend, he wandered up and down the lonely sea-shore, signaling every ship that passed the island. At length, a boat put off from a vessel and took him on board. At St. Helena, the first port made by the ship, he stopped, and engaging at once in some little speculations, gained some money which he spent in procuring a passage to New York. To that city he had sent from St. Domingo, a quantity of coffee, the proceeds of which he found awaiting his orders on arriving. Provided thus with a small capital, he embarked in trade, prospered, became the owner of a dozen ships, controlled the market for some descriptions of goods,* and retired about the year

* Grant Thorburn says:—"Stephen Jumel, a Frenchman, was among our early 'merchant princes.' One morning, about 10 o'clock, in the year 1806, this gentleman, in company with William Bayard, Harmon Leroy, Archibald Gracie, General Clarkson, and some dozen others, was reading and discussing the news just arrived from Liverpool, in the extraordinary short passage of *seven weeks!* The matter mostly concerned NAPOLEON THE FIRST and the bat-

1812 with what was then considered a great fortune. A man of sense, he had married a daughter of New England, a woman as remarkable for energy and talent as himself.

After Napoleon's downfall and the pacification of Europe, the family went to Paris, where they resided in splendor for many years, and where Madame Jumel, by her wit and tact, achieved a distinguished position in the court society of the place. Of the court itself she was a favored frequenter.

In the year 1822, M. Jumel lost a considerable part of his fortune, and madame returned alone to New York, bringing with her a prodigious quantity of grand furniture and paintings. Retiring to a seat in the upper part of Manhattan Island, which she possessed in her own right, she began with native energy the task of restoring her husband's broken fortunes. She cultivated her farm; she looked vigilantly to the remains of the estate; she economized. In 1828, when M. Jumel returned to the United States, they were not as rich as in former days, but their estate was ample for all rational purposes and enjoyments. In 1832, M. Jumel, a man of magnificent proportions, very handsome, and perfectly preserved (a great waltzer at seventy), was thrown from a wagon and fatally injured. He died in a few days. Madame was then little past her prime.

There was talk of cholera in the city. Madame Jumel resolved upon taking a carriage tour in the country. Before setting out, she wished to take legal advice respecting some

tle of Wagram. While thus engaged, a carman's horse backed his cart into the Whitehall slip, at the head of which they were grouped together. The cart was got out, but the horse was drowned, and every one began pitying the poor carman's ill luck. Jumel instantly arose, and placing a ten dollar bill between his thumb and fingers, and holding it aloft, while it fluttered in the breeze, and with his hat in the other hand he walked through the length and breadth of the crowd exclaiming, 'How much you pity the poor man? *I* pity him ten dollars. How much *you* pity him?' By this ingenious and noble *coup-d'etat*, he collected, in a few moments, above seventy dollars, which he gave over at once to the unfortunate and fortunate carman. (This is the original story — there have been many *imitations* of it since; but the *idea* of 'pitying a man' so much money, originated with my old acquaintance Jumel.)"

real estate, and as Colonel Burr's reputation in that department was preëminent, to his office in Reade-street she drove. In other days he had known her well, and though many an eventful year had passed since he had seen her, he recognized her at once. He received her in his courtliest manner, complimented her with admirable tact, listened with soft deference to her statement. He was the ideal man of business — confidential, self-possessed, polite — giving his client the flattering impression that the faculties of his whole soul were concentrated upon the affair in hand. She was charmed, yet feared him. He took the papers, named the day when his opinion would be ready, and handed her to her carriage with winning grace. At seventy-eight years of age, he was still straight, active, agile, fascinating.

On the appointed day she sent to his office a relative, a student of law, to receive his opinion. This young gentleman, timid and inexperienced, had an immense opinion of Burr's talents; had heard all good and all evil of him; supposed him to be, at least, the acutest of possible men. He went. Burr behaved to him in a manner so exquisitely pleasing, that, to this hour, he has the liveliest recollection of the scene. No topic was introduced but such as were familiar and interesting to young men. His manners were such as this age of slangy familiarity can not so much as imagine. The young gentleman went home to Madame Jumel only to extol and glorify him.

Madame and her party began their journey, revisiting Ballston, whither, in former times, she had been wont to go in a chariot drawn by eight horses; visiting Saratoga, then in the beginning of its celebrity, where, in exactly ten minutes after her arrival, the decisive lady bought a house and all it contained. Returning to New York to find that her mansion had been despoiled by robbers in her absence, she lived for a while in the city. Colonel Burr called upon the young gentleman who had been madame's messenger, and, after their acquaintance had ripened, said to him, "Come into my office; I can teach you more in a year than you can learn in ten, in an ordinary way." The proposition being submitted to Madame

Jumel, she, anxious for the young man's advancement, gladly and gratefully consented. He entered the office. Burr kept him close at his books. He *did* teach him more in a year than he could have learned in ten in an ordinary way. Burr lived then in Jersey City. His office (23 Nassau-street) swarmed with applicants for aid, and he seemed now to have quite lost the power of refusing. In no other respects, bodily or mental, did he exhibit signs of decrepitude.

Some months passed on without his again meeting Madame Jumel. At the suggestion of the student, who felt exceedingly grateful to Burr for the solicitude with which he assisted his studies, Madame Jumel invited Colonel Burr to dinner. It was a grand banquet, at which he displayed all the charms of his manner, and shone to conspicuous advantage. On handing to dinner the giver of the feast, he said: "I give you my hand, madame; my heart has long been yours." This was supposed to be merely a compliment, and was little remarked at the time. Colonel Burr called upon the lady; called frequently; became ever warmer in his attentions; proposed, at length, and was refused. He still plied his suit, however, and obtained at last, not the lady's consent, but an *undecided No.* Improving his advantage on the instant, he said, in a jocular manner, that he should bring out a clergyman to Fort Washington on a certain day, and there he would once more solicit her hand.

He was as good as his word. At the time appointed, he drove out in his gig to the lady's country residence, accompanied by Dr. Bogart, the very clergyman who, just fifty years before, had married him to the mother of his Theodosia. The lady was embarrassed, and still refused. But then the scandal! And, after all, why not? Her estate needed a vigilant guardian, and the old house was lonely. After much hesitation, she at length consented to be dressed, and to receive her visitors. And she was married. The ceremony was witnessed only by the members of Madame Jumel's family, and by the eight servants of the household, who peered eagerly in at the doors and windows. The ceremony over, Mrs. Burr ordered supper. Some bins of M. Jumel's wine

cellar, that had not been opened for half a century, were laid under contribution. The little party was a very merry one. The parson, in particular, it is remembered, was in the highest spirits, overflowing with humor and anecdote. Except for Colonel Burr's great age (which was not apparent), the match seemed not an unwise one. The lurking fear he had had of being a poor and homeless old man was put to rest. She had a companion who had been ever agreeable, and her estate a steward than whom no one living was supposed to be more competent.

As a remarkable circumstance connected with this marriage, it may be just mentioned that there was a woman in New York who had aspired to the hand of Colonel Burr, and who, when she heard of his union with another, wrung her hands and shed tears! A feeling of that nature can seldom, since the creation of man, have been excited by the marriage of a man on the verge of fourscore.

A few days after the wedding, the "happy pair" paid a visit to Connecticut, of which State a nephew of Colonel Burr's was then governor. They were received with attention. At Hartford, Burr advised his wife to sell out her shares in the bridge over the Connecticut at that place, and invest the proceeds in real estate. She ordered them sold. The stock was in demand, and the shares brought several thousand dollars. The purchasers offered to pay *her* the money, but she said, "No; pay it to my husband." To him, accordingly, it was paid, and he had it sewed up in his pocket, a prodigious bulk, and brought it to New York, and deposited it in his own bank, to his own credit.

Texas was then beginning to attract the tide of emigration which, a few years later, set so strongly thither. Burr had always taken a great interest in that country. Persons with whom he had been variously connected in life had a scheme on foot for settling a large colony of Germans on a tract of land in Texas. A brig had been chartered, and the project was in a state of forwardness, when the possession of a sum of money enabled Burr to buy shares in the enterprise. The greater part of the money which he had brought from Hart-

ford was invested in this way. It proved a total loss. The time had not yet come for emigration to Texas. The Germans became discouraged and separated, and, to complete the failure of the scheme, the title of the lande in the confusion of the times, proved defective. Meanwhile madame, who was a remarkably thrifty woman, with a talent for the management of property, wondered that her husband made no allusion to the subject of the investment; for the Texas speculation had not been mentioned to her. She caused him to be questioned on the subject. He begged to intimate to the lady's messenger that it was no affair of her's, and requested her to remind the lady that she now had a husband to manage her affairs, and one who would manage them.

Coolness between the husband and wife was the result of this colloquy. Then came remonstrances. Then estrangement. Burr got into the habit of remaining at his office in the city. Then, partial reconciliation. Full of schemes and speculations to the last, without retaining any of his former ability to operate successfully, he lost more money, and more, and more. The patience of the lady was exhausted. She filed a complaint accusing him of *infidelity*, and praying that he might have no more control or authority over her affairs. The accusation is now known to have been groundless; nor, indeed, at the time was it seriously believed. It was used merely as the most convenient legal mode of depriving him of control over her property. At first, he answered the complaint vigorously, but afterward, he allowed it to go by default and proceedings were carried no further. A few short weeks of happiness, followed by a few months of alternate estrangement and reconciliation, and this union, that begun not inauspiciously, was, in effect, though never in law, dissolved. What is strangest of all is, that the lady, though she never saw her husband during the last two years of his life, cherished no ill-will toward him, and shed tears at his death. To this hour, Madame Jumel thinks and speaks of him with kindness, attributing what was wrong or unwise in his conduct to the infirmities of age.

Men of seventy-eight have been married before and since. But, probably, never has there been another instance of a man of that age, winning a lady of fortune and distinction, grieving another by his marriage, and exciting suspicions of incontinence against himself by his attentions to a third!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HIS LAST YEARS AND HOURS.

Stricken with Paralysis — His Last and Best Friend — Anecdotes of His Sickness — Dying Declaration Respecting His Expedition — Interviews with a Clergyman — His Last Moments — Funeral — Monument.

One morning, about the close of the year 1833, while Colnel Burr, in company with a friend, was passing the old City Hotel, in the lower part of Broadway, his step suddenly faltered, he leaned heavily upon his friend's arm, and was soon compelled to come to a halt.

"What is the matter, colonel?" asked his friend.

"I don't know," was his reply; "something seems to be the matter with my walking; I can't step; there 's no feeling nor strength in this leg."

He was assisted to the wall of the hotel, where he leaned for a few moments, hoping the strange affection would pass off. As it grew no better, a carriage was called; he was driven to his office in Nassau-street, and a doctor was summoned, who pronounced the disease paralysis. Prostrate and helpless was the active man at last. His wife, with whom he had not lived for some time, forgot the losses she had suffered through his indiscretion, when she heard that he was sick, and went to see him. "Come *home*," said she; "here you can have no proper attendance." Her carriage was at the door, and he went home with her to Fort Washington, where a month's assiduous and tender nursing, to the surprise of every one, restored him. But just as soon as he was upon his feet again, he was eager to be in town, at his suits, at his speculations; and it was after this "first warning," that the legal proceedings were instituted which led to the final estrangement between the ill-mated pair.

He would never own that he had had a paralytic stroke. He insisted that he was perfectly well, and was offended if any one asked a question which implied the contrary. Tenaciously he clung to life. He would be the beau, the man of business, the great lawyer, to the last.

But a second stroke followed, a few months later, depriving forever of life and motion both his lower limbs. There was no concealing this calamity. Yet, for a while, his mind was as active as ever, and his general health unimpaired. Reclining upon a sofa in his office, he saw his friends and clients as usual, and wrote letters, billet-doux, notes, opinions, without number. His pen should walk for him, travel for him, plead for him; he would be thought, as he thought himself, as efficient a man as ever he was. This could not last. It was apparent to every one but himself that his mental powers were no longer adequate to the discharge of business, and partly by a sense of decreasing strength, partly by the persuasions of friends, he was induced gradually to relax his hold upon mundane things, and subside into the tranquillity that befitted his age and condition.

The close of his life was solaced and cheered by a friend, who proved herself a friend indeed. Far back to the earliest days of the Revolution we must look for the first of the series of events which secured to the helpless old man those tender attentions from the hand and heart of a woman which age and sickness need.

During the expedition to Canada, while the American forces lay near the heights of Quebec, Burr, whose stock of provisions was reduced to a biscuit and an onion, went down to a small brook to drink. Having no cup, he was proceeding to use the top of his cap as a drinking vessel, when a British officer who had come to the other side of the brook for the same purpose saluted him politely, and offered him the use of his hunting cup. Burr accepted the offer, and the two enemies entered into conversation. The officer, pleased with the frank and gallant bearing of the youth — for a youth he seemed — concluded the interview by bestowing upon him the truly munificent gift of part of a horse's tongue. They in-

quired each other's name. "When next we meet," said the Briton, "it will be as enemies, but if we should ever come together after the war is over, let us know each other better." Stepping upon some stones in the middle of the brook, they shook hands, and parted. In the subsequent operations of the war, each saw the other occasionally, but before the peace the British officer went home badly wounded.

Thirty-six years after, when Colonel Burr was an exile in Scotland, he met that officer again; an old man then, residing upon his estate. Each had a vivid recollection of the scene at the brook in the old wars, and a warm friendship sprang up between them. Colonel Burr visited the house of the aged officer, and received from him assistance of the most essential kind, namely, a loan of three hundred pounds, besides valuable introductions.

Twenty-four years later, the daughter of that Scottish officer, ruined in fortune by a husband's extravagance, was at the head of a large boarding house in New York, near the Bowling Green. Both herself and her husband had been friends of Colonel Burr ever since their arrival in New York, and, after her husband's death, Burr was her lawyer and man-of-business. This lady was, and is, one of the kindest and sprightliest of her sex; a woman of high breeding, with too little of the provincial in her character to have more than a very slight respect for that terror of provincial souls, MRS. GRUNDY.

She heard that Colonel Burr was lying sick and helpless at his office, and she went to see him. She sent him delicacies from her table. She kept a general oversight of his domestic arrangements for some months, and then, with her husband's hearty concurrence (she had married again) invited and urged him to come and take up his abode in her house as long as he lived. He should pay the extra expenses which she might incur, but he should be, in effect as in name, her guest. The summer of 1834 saw him established in the two basement rooms of her house, with all his familiar relics, books, pictures, and furniture round him. It was the "old Jay house" — where his former friend, Governor John Jay, had resided. Another

coincidence was, that the man-servant who chiefly waited upon him at this time, had been for many years butler to De Witt Clinton.

For two years he lay upon his bed, or reclined in an arm-chair, free from pain, and growing weaker only by insensible degrees. Ever cheerful, often merry, always kind, visited occasionally by his old friends, and visited continually by old and new pensioners; every want anticipated and supplied, his life glided on tranquilly toward its close. He caused the portrait of Theodosia to be hung so that he could look upon it as he lay in bed, and tears have been observed to course slowly down his furrowed cheeks as he gazed upon it. For hours at a time he would lie silent with his eyes fixed upon his daughter's face. Always inclined to be taciturn, he was now more silent than ever. Never accustomed to speak ill or harshly of others, he never, during these two years, alluded to any one but with charity. He gave very little trouble to his attendants, and addressed them always with marked courtesy. A sick girl was never more delicate than he.

In the early months of his sickness he took the most intense interest in the affairs of Texas, then in the midst of her struggle for independence, aided by thousands of American citizens. A gentleman who called upon him one morning, at this period, found him, newspaper in hand, all excitement, his eyes blazing.

"*There!*" exclaimed the old man, pointing to the news from Texas, "you see? I was right! I was only thirty years too soon! What was treason in me thirty years ago, is patriotism now!!"

He lived to see Texas an independent State — made such chiefly by emigrants and adventurers from the United States.

Phrenology became the town-talk in 1835. It was a new thing with us then, and had few adherents. The young poet Barlow, one of the first practitioners in the science, dined one day at the house where Colonel Burr resided, when it occurred to the landlady to give him an opportunity to test his power of reading character. She said to him, "We have an old gentleman from the country upon a visit to us, whom I

should like you to see. He seems to me to have quite a remarkable head, though he is not a highly educated man."

The phrenologist having intimated his willingness to examine him, she went below to prepare Colonel Burr for the interview, cautioning him to say nothing, and, above all, to keep still, lest a bow or a gesture should betray him. He was reclining in a chair, attired in a flannel dressing-gown, when Barlow was ushered into his apartment. His nurse, who was sitting at a table sewing, was to personate the daughter of the old gentleman.

"This gentleman, sir," said the lady, "is a phrenologist, and I have brought him to examine your head."

He nodded, and the examination began.

"What a head!" was the phrenologist's first whisper. "Who is he? Where does he come from?"

"Oh," replied the lady, "he is an old friend of my father's. He lives in Connecticut, and has come to the city for medical advice. But I won't tell you any thing more about him till you have given us his character. You wouldn't suppose him to be a clergyman, would you?"

"A clergyman!" exclaimed Barlow. "Great heavens. No! I would sooner take him for a man of war than a man of peace. If he had been an educated man, he could have set the world in arms! This is a Van Buren head, only of higher ambition and greater powers."

"He would have made a good soldier, then, if he had been called upon to fight?" inquired the lady.

"Such a head as *that*," said the phrenologist, "might have led an army, and conquered a world! It is a great head! a very great head! What a pity he should have lived in obscurity! With many noble traits of character, however, he has some bad ones. He is generous to a fault. He takes pleasure in giving, whether his own or other's property. He is very secretive; relies on his own judgment; is seldom swerved by the advice of others. He feels that he was born to command, and is as brave as a lion. He would have made a great scholar, a great statesman, a great orator, a great any thing, if he had but had the chance. Yet he can descend to

duplicity to gain his ends. He is not over-conscientious when his passions or his feelings are concerned. As a statesman, he would have been diplomatic, and firm as a rock, whether for evil or for good. A firm friend, without boasting or presuming. More generous than just. He has little reverence, yet would scarcely be an unbeliever. His head is indeed a study — a strange, contradictory head. He is very irritable, and impatient of control. He could look into the souls of men. Gracious! what a lawyer he would have made! And that's his daughter, is it? What a difference! One would almost think it impossible. This head is one of those that think every thing possible, and will dare all to gain a point. He has been fond of the fair sex, too, in his day. But his bad qualities are overtopped by his good ones. And now, pray tell me who this gentleman is?"

"Colonel Aaron Burr, sir," replied the lady, in triumph.

The phrenologist started back, with a curious blending of curiosity and shame expressed in his face and attitude.

"Oh, sir, pardon me," he said; "if I had known who it was that I was examining, I should not have presumed to say what I have said. But this is an honor I have long wished for, and nothing could have given me greater delight."

"Sir," whispered Burr, in his blandest manner, "you have given me no offense."

This ended the interview. The next day, the lady said to him that she thought Mr. Barlow had hit his character very correctly.

"No, madame," he replied, with unexpected gravity, "he made some great mistakes. He said I was irritable. I am not irritable."

The phrenologist was right, however. He had been irritable in his way.

His chief amusement during these monotonous months was reading. He read much, but not many things. Chiefly he liked his good friend to read to him something of a tender or sentimental cast. Sterne was a great favorite, particularly the story of Le Fevre in Tristram Shandy. Uncle Toby's treatment of the fly was quite to his taste. One day, after a long

reading from Sterne, he said, "If I had read Sterne more, and Voltaire less, I should have known that the world was wide enough for Hamilton and me."

It was a custom of the busy lady of the house to visit him twice every day. The doctor ordered him champagne, which she used to bring him with her own hands after dinner. Revived by the draught, he would then be eager to hear something read. "Well, my child," he would say, "have you any thing to comfort me with to-day? Read something good, something classical, something sweet. Let us have a pleasant half hour." The lady, herself a poetess, liked nothing better than to repeat to him her favorites and his own. Some bits of Moore he was never tired of hearing; above all, he liked the poem written by Moore upon hearing that the Prince Regent, with his usual meanness, had deserted a lovely girl whom he had ruined. Burr loathed conduct of that nature with a perfect loathing.

"When first I met thee, warm and young,
There shone such truth about thee,
And on thy lip such promise hung,
I did not dare to doubt thee.
I saw thee change, yet still relied,
Still clung with hope the fonder,
And thought, though false to all beside,
From *me* thou could'st not wander.
But go, deceiver! go,
The heart, whose hopes could make it
Trust one so false, so low,
Deserves that thou shouldst break it.

"When every tongue thy follies named,
I fled the unwelcome story;
Or found, in even the faults they blamed,
Some gleams of future glory.
I still was true, when nearer friends
Conspired to wrong, to slight thee;
The heart that now thy falsehood rends
Would then have bled to right thee.
But go, deceiver! go —
Some day, perhaps, thou'lt waken
From pleasure's dream, to know
The grief of hearts forsaken."

Moore's "Oft in the stilly night," was another of his favorites. When his memory was almost gone, he would whisper the first line, and ask, "How does it go on, my dear? Say it." Some psalms and hymns that he had learned in childhood seemed to linger in his memory. One psalm, in particular, he often repeated and praised:

> "It was not any open foe
> That false reflections made."

Nothing pleased him better than a timely and apt quotation. Some gentlemen were in his room one evening, when the conversation took a severer tone than he liked. Slow to speak ill of any one, he never relished denunciatory language. After one of his guests had finished some severe remarks, the lady of the house stepped forward, and in the quick, graceful manner peculiar to her, repeated these lines from Burns's Address to the Unco Gude:

> "Then gently scan your brother man,
> Still gentler sister woman;
> Though they may gang a kennin' wrang,
> To step aside is human;
> One point must still be greatly dark,
> The moving *Why* they do it;
> And just as lamely can ye mark
> How far, perhaps, they rue it.
>
> "Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
> Decidedly can try us;
> He knows each chord — its various tone,
> Each spring — its various bias;
> Then at the balance let 's be mute,
> We never can adjust it;
> What's done we partly may compute,
> But know not what's resisted."

Good humor was restored; a better spirit prevailed in the company. Burr, who had lain silent up to this time, now expressed the keenest delight. "*How* good!" he kept whispering. "How *very* good. So like you, my dear; *so* like

you!" He was exceedingly pleased, and often alluded to the scene and the lines afterward.

He was a foe to melancholy, to the last. His kind friend said to him one evening, when he seemed weaker than usual: "Well, colonel, I'm afraid we shan't have you here long; but it 's a sad world, after all, and I wish I was going too."

"Don't say so, child," said he; "I have lived my day; you are young; your time is before you; enjoy it."

On another occasion, when she had met with an affliction, she said to him, "O, colonel, how *shall* I get through this?"

"LIVE through it, my dear!" was his emphatic reply.

Still complaining, she said, "This *will* kill me, colonel, I know I can not survive *this*."

"Well," said he, "*die*, then, madame: we must all die; but bless me, die game!"

One lovely afternoon, she said, as she arranged his pillows, "O! colonel, if you were only forty years younger, and we were walking by the side of some pleasant stream, with beautiful flowers all around us, how happy we could be this afternoon."

"Well, my child," said he, "and we *shall* walk by the side of pleasant streams, amid beautiful flowers, if we are to believe the Book!"

Bringing him the papers, as usual, one morning she called his attention to some false statements relating to his duel with Hamilton, and said to him,

"How can you, colonel, let these people traduce you so, when you have the documents in your possession that would exonerate you?"

"I am already exonerated," was his reply.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"*There!*" said he, pointing upward.

A scene occurred in the dining-room of the house while he lay helpless, which may as well be related here. A gentleman called to engage board, found suitable rooms, and said he would call in the afternoon to say whether he would take them. He came to dinner. Addressing himself in an embarrassed, hesitating manner to the landlady, he said he had

just heard of a circumstance which would deprive him of the pleasure he had anticipated in residing under her roof. He understood that Aaron Burr was a boarder in the house, and he really could not live in the same house with a man of that character.

The blood of all the Montroses was up in a moment. She rose from her chair, and said, with flashing eye, and subdued intensity of tone :

"You have been misinformed, sir, Colonel Burr is *not* a boarder in this house. He is my guest, sir, my honored guest! Before any boarder in this house is served, Colonel Burr is served."

Then, turning to a servant who was waiting at the table, she said, in the manner of Napoleon ordering a column to the attack, "Patrick, take away that person's plate, and open the door!"

Patrick obeyed, and the "person" retired without venturing any further observations.

This brave lady could not, of course, escape sharing, to some extent, the odium that surrounded the name of the man whose last days her wit and kindness cheered.

"What do you think I've heard this morning, colonel?" said she to him on one occasion. "They say I'm your daughter."

"Well," said he, "we don't care for that, do we?"

"Not a bit!" was her reply. "But they say something else, colonel," she continued; "they say I was your mistress."

"Do they?" said he, "I don't think we care much for that either, do we?"

"They must say what they choose," she replied—the gallant soldier's daughter!

"But," said he, taking her hand in both his, and lifting it to his lips, his hands shaking with paralysis, "I'll tell you something they *might* say that would be true! Let them say this of you: *She gave the old man a home when nobody else would!*"

He uttered these words with an emphasis so tender and penetrating, that two of his relatives who were present, one a

member of the bar, and the other a judge, could not refrain from tears.

To the last he was ever giving. His friend said to him once,

"I think you are not particular enough in your charities. The man to whom you have just given money, I am sure, is a drunkard."

"He may be," said Burr, "but that has nothing to do with what I gave him. He asked it for God's sake, and for God's sake I gave it."

"O, colonel," said she, "you can't say no; can you?"

"Not when I have any thing to give," he replied. "I am, indeed, an exquisite fool, an inimitable fool."

As a set-off to this, it must be recorded that a dunning scene, of considerable violence on the part of the dunner, took place during these months. The man, it appears, called several times without hitting upon one of the periods when the exchequer had been very recently replenished, and, of course, could not get his money. He flew into a great rage, at length, and berated the old man with fluency. Burr made not the least reply to him, but waited placidly till it was over, and then addressed a remark on some other subject to another person. The man stood a moment with a puzzled and balked expression of countenance, and then retired. It should be added that Burr's pecuniary affairs, at this time, were managed for him by a relative — an application to whom would not have been so unsuccessful. But it is good always to bear in mind that fierce dunning is the natural accompaniment of loose spending.

In the spring of 1836 it was apparent to those about him that his strength was rapidly diminishing, and that a very few months or weeks would terminate his mortal career. He knew it himself, and spoke of it without reserve. He was more than resigned; at times, he seemed slightly impatient for the closing scene. While thus waiting for death, he never seemed to look *forward*, curious to penetrate the vail, behind which he was soon to pass. His mind wandered *backward* to the remote past. From a long doze of some hours' duration,

he would awake to speak of people at Princeton, whom he had known at college, of fellow soldiers in the revolutionary war, of Theodosia and her boy. He talked sometimes of the biography which he knew was to be published after his death, and appeared to be anxious that, at last, his countrymen should know him as he was. He was most concerned that his military career should be fully and truly related. "If they persist in saying that I was a bad man," he said, "they shall at least admit that I was a good soldier." He wished to be thought brave. In speaking of his own death he would say, "A brave man never fears death," or, "Death is terrible only to cowards," or, "Death has no terrors for me."

In the early part of June, when the weather grew suddenly warm, he was supposed for some days to be sinking. Dr. Hosack, who attended him, thought that a few days, perhaps a few hours, were all that he had to live. Mr. Davis told him the doctor's opinion, and, in view of his approaching death, asked him whether, in the expedition to the South-west, he had designed a separation of the Union. With some impatience he replied,

"No; I would as soon have thought of taking possession of the moon, and informing my friends that I intended to divide it among them!"

He revived. It chanced that the "Jay House" was that summer to be pulled down, and it was necessary that he should be removed. Lodgings were procured for him for the summer, at Port Richmond, on Staten Island, in a small hotel that stood, and still stands, a few yards from the steamboat landing. At parting with his kind hostess, he showed extreme sensibility. He was tenderly grateful to her for her unbounded goodness to him, and expressed his gratitude in a thousand quaint and delicate ways, which can scarcely be described in words. "What are you," he would ask, "that you should be so kind to the old man?" And she would reply that "she was the little mouse that came to the help of the sick lion." He liked an apt reply of that kind; afterward, he would often run his fingers fondly through her auburn locks, and call her his little mouse. He was carried to the steamboat on

a litter, accompanied by a few of his friends, among whom *she*, of course, was one. She saw him safe into his apartment at Port Richmond, in which she had before placed the articles essential to his comfort, and then left him in charge of his nurse and the man-servant before mentioned, an aged and responsible man. Relatives of Colonel Burr lived near, who also visited him, and saw that his wants were all supplied.

"Good-by, colonel," said his friend, as she was leaving him for the night. "Good-by; I shall come and see you every day."

He took her hand, and raising it between his own in the manner of supplication, he said, in a tone of mingled tenderness and fervency never to be forgotten: "May God for ever, and for ever, and for *ever*, bless you, my last, best friend. When the HOUR comes, I will look out, in the better country, for one bright spot for you — be sure."

The sea air at first benefited him greatly; and he even felt so much better as to talk of returning to the city and continuing his law business. His friends dissuaded him. He went so far as to set on foot a small intrigue with some oystermen, with the design of getting them to row him back to the city on the sly. The price was agreed upon, and the time appointed, when the plot was discovered by his friends, and defeated by a counter plot. They invited him to ride. As the time approached when the oystermen were to meet him, he exhibited signs of uneasiness, and proposed, at last, that they should turn back.

"Why, colonel," said one of them, "we started, you know, for Richmond, and I thought you were a man who always carried through what you undertook."

"Drive on," was his quick reply; and thus his little last plot was defeated.

As the summer advanced his strength declined. The last weeks of his life were cheered by the frequent visits of the Rev. Dr. P. J. Vanpelt, the estimable Reformed Dutch clergyman of the neighborhood, who was invited to attend him by Judge Ogden Edwards, a relative and active friend of Colonel Burr's. Burr accepted his visits and services with thankful

courtesy, without making any compromise of his own opinions.

"I was uniformly received by him," writes Dr. Vanpelt, "with his accustomed politeness and urbanity of manner. The time spent with him at each interview — which was an hour, more or less — was chiefly employed in religious conversations, adapted to his declining health, his feeble state of body, and his advanced age, concluding by prayer to Almighty God for the exercise of his great mercy, the influence of his Holy Spirit and divine blessing. In all which he appeared to take an interest and be pleased, and particularly would thank me for the prayers I offered up in his behalf, for my kind offices, and the interest I took in his spiritual welfare, saying it gave him great pleasure to see me and hear my voice. And when I reminded him of the advantages he had enjoyed, of his honored and pious ancestry, viz.: his father a minister of the Gospel, and President of the College at Princeton, New Jersey, and his mother a descendant of the learned and celebrated divine, Jonathan Edwards; and that doubtless many prayers had gone up to heaven from the hearts of his parents for his well-being and happiness, it seemed to affect him. And when I asked him as to his views of the holy Scriptures, he responded — 'They are the most perfect system of truth the world has ever seen.' So that judging from his own declaration and behavior to me, as his spiritual adviser, he was not an atheist nor a deist.

"I did not administer the holy sacrament to him, nor did he suggest or request me to do it.

"In regard to other topics, in the course of repeated conversations, he remarked he was near General Montgomery when he fell at Quebec; and that notwithstanding that disaster, if the army had pushed on, they would have succeeded. In reference to the affair and death of General Hamilton but little was said. He intimated, however, that he was provoked to that encounter.

"At my last interview with him, about twelve o'clock at noon, the day he departed this life, I found him, as usual,

pleased to see me, tranquil in mind, and not disturbed by bodily pain.

"Observing a paleness and change in his countenance, and his pulse tremulous, fluttering, and erratic, I asked him how he felt. He replied, not so well as when I saw him last. I then said, 'Colonel, I do not wish to alarm you, but judging from the state of your pulse, your time with us is short.' He replied, 'I am aware of it.' It was then near one o'clock, P.M., and his mind and memory seemed perfect. I said to him, 'In this solemn hour of your apparent dissolution, believing, as you do, in the sacred Scriptures, your accountability to God, let me ask you how you feel in view of approaching eternity; whether you have good hope, through grace, that all your sins will be pardoned, and God will, in mercy, pardon you, for the sake of the merits and righteousness of his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who in love suffered and died for us the agonizing, bitter death of the cross, by whom alone we can have the only sure hope of salvation?' To which he said, with deep and evident emotion, 'On that subject I am coy;' by which I understood him to mean, that on a subject of such magnitude and momentous interest, touching the assurance of his salvation, he felt coy, cautious (as the word denotes) to express himself in full confidence.

"With his usual cordial concurrence and manifest desire we kneeled in prayer before the throne of heavenly grace — imploring God's mercy and blessing. He turned in his bed, and put himself in an humble, devotional posture, and seemed deeply engaged in the religious service, thanking me, as usual, for the prayer made for him.

"Calm and composed, I recommended him to the mercy of God, and to the word of his grace, with a last farewell."

The last audible word whispered by the dying man was the one, of all others in the language, the most familiar to his lips. A few minutes before he breathed his last, he lifted his hand with difficulty to his spectacles, and seemed to be trying to take them off. His attendant asked him if he wished them removed. He nodded assent. Fixing his eyes (brilliant to the last) upon the spectacles in her hand, he faintly whispered,

"*Madame*,"
evidently meaning that they were to be given to madame, the friend of his last years. He lay awhile softly breathing. At two o'clock in the afternoon, without a struggle or a sigh, as gently as an infant falls asleep, he ceased to live. His friend arrived from the city an hour too late to close his eyes.

He died on Wednesday, the 14th of September, 1836, aged eighty years, seven months, and eight days. On the Friday following, his funeral was celebrated. A large party of gentlemen — the Messrs. Swartwout, Major Popham, Judge Edwards, Mr. Davis, and several others reached Port Richmond, from the city, by an early boat, "to pay the last honors to Pompey," as one of them expressed it. In his last days, he had requested to be buried at Princeton, as nearly as possible at the feet of his father and grandfather, the two presidents of the college, who lie side by side in its cemetery. His remains were accordingly conveyed to Princeton, accompanied by the gentlemen just named, and placed in the chapel of the college, where the funeral ceremonies were to be performed. An impressive and charitable sermon was preached on the occasion by the Rev. Dr. Carnahan, the president of the college; who, as president, resided in the very house which Colonel Burr's father had built ninety years before, and in which his gifted, erring son had been cradled. "The fashion of this world passeth away," was the text of the discourse. The Cliosophic Society, of which the youthful Burr had been one of the founders, voted to attend his funeral in a body, and to wear the usual badge of mourning for thirty days. A volunteer company of Princeton, called the Mercer Guards, escorted the remains of the old soldier to the grave, and fired over it the customary volleys. Most of the students of the college, and a large concourse of the people of the town witnessed with curiosity the closing ceremonial which consigned to the grave all that was mortal of Aaron Burr. Far, far, had he wandered from the ways of his fathers, to lie down at their feet at last.

The news of his death called public attention once more to his character and conduct; the newspaper comment upon

which was — what might have been expected. Absurdly false accounts* were given of his life and death, and the occasion was improved to point a great many morals, and to adorn a variety of tales. One or two papers in this city that ventured to say a few (injudicious) words in praise of the dead lion, were sharply called to order for the same by his old, but generally honorable foe, the *Evening Post*. When the Magazines came to review his memoirs, a few months later, the strife seems to have been which should heap upon his grave the greatest amount of obloquy. The *New York Review* and the

* As a specimen of the newspaper stories still in circulation respecting Burr, take the following, which has probably appeared in fifteen hundred newspapers of the United States, besides a large number in England and Scotland. As it is destitute of even the slightest foundation of truth, *some body* must have sat down and deliberately manufactured it. It has usually been credited to the *Presbyterian Herald:*

"There were some facts connected with the closing scenes of Mr. Burr's life which were told to us soon after they occurred, by one who received them from an eye witness, which we do not now remember to have seen stated any where in print. We suppose that we will not be considered as violating the privacy of the domestic circle in referring to them at this remote period after their occurrence.

"During Mr. Burr's last illness, he was very restless and impatient toward those who were about his person, often indulging in profane and abusive language. His physician, observing that mortification had commenced in the extremities, thought it his duty to inform him of the fact, and to assure him that whatever preparation he might wish to make for death, should be made at once. In as gentle tones as he could command, he broached the subject, assuring him that within twenty-four hours, at the farthest, he would be a dead man. Mr. Burr, 'Doctor, I can't die. I shan't die. My father and mother, and grand-parents, and uncles and aunts, were all pious and godly people; they prayed for my conversion a thousand times, and if God be a hearer of prayer, he is not going to let me die until their prayers are answered. It is impossible that the child of so many prayers will be lost.'

"The doctor replied, 'Mr. Burr, you are already dying.' He then went over pretty much the same expression as given above, and sank into a stupor, and soon slept the sleep which knows no waking until the morning of the resurrection. We may not have given the precise language used by him, as years have elapsed since it was reported to us. Our informant received the impression that he had run the rounds of his iniquity, all the while indulging the hope that, like the celebrated Augustine, before he died he would be converted, in answer to the prayers of his pious parents and friends."

Democratic Review were unsparingly and bitterly severe. The *North American Review* was gentler and fairer; but gave him little quarter.

One poetical tribute was paid to his memory by his last Friend. It never saw the light, and has lain twenty-one years in the blank book of the authoress unread. It was addressed

"TO ONE WHOM THE WORLD REVILED.

"To thee no widow told her woes
'And found them unredressed;
To thee no shivering orphan came
But found a home and rest:
And many — would they truth reveal —
Have on thy bounty fed,
Who, when thine hour of sorrow came,
The van of slander led.
Great spirit! some, who knew thee well,
Paid tribute to thy worth;
A few, who disregard the frowns
Of groveling sons of earth,
Around thee clung, in that dread hour
When friendship's balm is sweet —
The hour thou left this earthly bar
The world's great judge to meet;
That judge who knows each various spring
That moves the human heart,
Who gives to Death the victory,
But leaves the sting apart,
Who in the balance nicely weighs
Our deeds of good and ill,
Who knows our various faults and crimes,
But leans to mercy still.
Then warrior, rest! thy trial's o'er,
And naught of earth can touch thee more."

He left no available property. A few pictures, a few mementoes of his daughter, several cart-loads of law papers, some sacks of letters, a few articles of office furniture, and a quantity of well-worn clothes, were all that remained of the countless sums he had received in his long career. Several years after his death, however, a reversionary claim which he held to some property, fell to the lot of his only surviving daughter,

who was a girl eight years of age when he died. The last words he ever spoke to his friend were a request that she would look to the welfare of that child, and see, especially, that she was sent to good schools. That he should have made a will seemed, at the time, somewhat ridiculous to his friends — little dreaming that it would, in a few years, secure a considerable sum to his daughter.

As all in the life of Aaron Burr had something of strangeness and peculiarity, it is not surprising, perhaps, that a stone could not be placed over his grave except in an extraordinary manner. Some efforts were made, and some money was subscribed, soon after his death, to procure a suitable monument, but the project failed through the inattention of an agent. For nearly two years the spot where he lay was unmarked, when one morning it was discovered that a small, very substantial, and not inexpensive monument of granite and marbie, had been placed, during the night, over his remains. The cemetery at Princeton is situated in a somewhat thickly-inhabited lane, and is overlooked, in every part, by people living upon its borders. The principal gate is kept locked. No one in the town saw the monument erected, or knew, or knows any thing whatever respecting it. Nor was there any stone-cutter in the vicinity competent to execute such a piece of work. No relative of Colonel Burr, nor any one of my numerous informants explains the mystery.

The person who did the pious deed is known, however, and lives. Need I say, that to a woman's liberal hand Burr owes the stone that commemorates his name? In an inclosure of the cemetery, wherein lie the honored remains of the early Presidents of the College of New Jersey — Burr, Edwards, Davies, Witherspoon, and others — stands a block of marble, bearing the following inscription:

AARON BURR:

Born February 6th, 1756.
Died September 14th, 1836.

A COLONEL IN THE ARMY OF THE REVOLUTION.

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES FROM 1801 TO 1805.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

OTHER FACTS, AND SOME REFLECTIONS.

"Whatever happens," Burr used to say, in jocular allusion to the largeness of his head, "my *hat*, at least, is safe: for nobody else can wear it."

His head was large, and very peculiar. A few hours after his death, a cast was taken of it, for the well-known phrenologists, Messrs. Fowler and Wells, of New York, who still exhibit in their cabinet the original cast. In the most striking manner it confirms the view taken of the character of Burr in this volume.

There are, probably, few intelligent persons now in the United States who doubt that phrenology is *among* the means by which a knowledge of the character of a man may be obtained. Unconsciously or consciously, we have, most of us, fallen into the habit of using the language of phrenology, and looking at one another with the phrenologist's eye. Charlotte Brontë, in describing her characters, frequently used language precisely similar to that employed by a professional phrenologist. Note this example from the *Professor:* "I wonder that any one, looking at that girl's head and countenance, would have received her under their roof. She had precisely the same shaped head as Pope Alexander the Sixth. Her organs of benevolence, veneration, conscientiousness, adhesiveness, were singularly small; those of self-esteem, firmness, destructiveness, combativeness, preposterously large. Her head, sloped up in the pent-house shape, was contracted about the forehead, and prominent behind." More or less, we all talk so of the people we look at with attention. Every observant person that

has ever lived must have been instinctively a phrenologist, as well as a physiognomist.

It is believed by moralists, and *known* by phrenologists, that no man is bad from necessity. The best organizations need culture, and the very worst, by culture, can be rendered, first, innoxious, then beneficent. Phrenology has to do chiefly with the raw material of character — the stuff it is made of. It has nothing to say of the circumstances, the beliefs, the influences, which nourish one class of organs, leave others dormant, and so insensibly "mold the character." Let no one, therefore, view the annexed account of the head of Aaron Burr as a justification of his errors; but merely as a statement of his natural quality and tendencies, which it was the office of Education to correct, and of Reason to control.

A fact should be mentioned in elucidation of one of the phrenologist's observations. There was a remarkable predominance of the feminine element in the *Edwards* stock. Timothy Edwards, the father of Jonathan, and, therefore Burr's great-grandfather, had eleven children, of whom ten were daughters Jonathan Edwards had eight daughters and three sons. Of the grand-children of Timothy Edwards, about two thirds were daughters. And now the phrenologist tells us, that Aaron Burr himself had the temperament of a woman.

The following statement was made by Mr. L. N. Fowler, who knew nothing of what I had written or discovered respecting Aaron Burr, and of whom I asked only the unrelenting truth:

"PHRENOLOGICAL CHARACTER

OF

AARON BURR,

DEDUCED FROM AN ORIGINAL CAST OF HIS HEAD.

"The physiological organization of Aaron Burr was distinguished for very fine texture and a great degree of susceptibility, intensity, and ardor, caused by a predominance of the nervous temperament, with a very active condition of the ar-

terial system. In fact, all the organs and functions of his constitution were remarkably active, and the circulation must have been unusually quick and free.

"There was not so much of the bony and muscular system as to be an impediment to his activity, yet there was a sufficient degree of the motive temperament to give strength and tenacity of organization. He was of small size, and well proportioned, but the brain was large for the body; hence he was characterized by mental, rather than by physical ability. Such was the harmony between the functions of the body as to indicate unusual health, vivacity, and power to endure without premature exhaustion. His temperament was more peculiarly that of a woman, joined to the mental qualities of the masculine.

"His Phrenological developments were marked and peculiar, and gave him a strong individuality of character. His head was of rather large size, and fully developed in most parts. The hair, at the time of his death, being almost gone, left his head nearly bare, so that the cast taken after death indicates the real development of the organs, and thereby affords a most valuable study.

"His intellectual development shows that all the perceptive organs are prominent; which, with his temperament and susceptibility, gave him an unusual degree of observation, accuracy of perception, ability to accumulate knowledge, and capacity to bring his powers to bear directly upon the subject in hand, or object he wished to effect. He had a wonderful memory of every thing he saw, of places, faces, and proportions. His mechanical eye must have been remarkably correct, which, joined to Locality, Individuality, and Weight, gave him ease and grace of motion, extraordinary powers as a marksman, and good judgment of the qualities and conditions of things. His memory of events, sense of order and arrangement, perception of colors, ability in figures, and love of music, were comparatively good. His sense of Wit was decidedly prominent, and he had uncommon power to use his mirthful emotions, in appreciating the ridiculous, or wielding the weapons of satire appropriately and readily.

"The reasoning organs were rather large, but somewhat inferior to the perceptions. The strength of the reasoning faculties was made to appear conspicuous, in consequence of his clearness of perception, sharpness of analysis, facility of expression, policy of arrangement, and power to illuminate his own side of a subject, and to magnetize his hearers into an acceptance of his opinions and an adherence to his cause. The intellectual faculties, as a whole, gave him superior influence over other men, not only in consequence of the great activity of his mind, but the peculiar power he had to use his knowledge and talents to advantage. His Language was large, which enabled him to communicate his ideas, and tell what he knew. He was copious and pertinent in speech, full and free in his powers to explain, and decidedly easy and off-hand as an orator. This quality, connected with his ready memory, power of analysis, and fervor of mind, gave him great influence over others in conversation. He had an eye of peculiar brilliancy and fascination, and when, from under his finely arched, perceptive brow, he bent his burning gaze upon a person, his words seemed like potential oracles, and gave him peculiar power over those whom he wished to sway.

"His executive faculties were all strong. His head being decidedly broad about the ears, gave him an unusual degree of force, resolution, energy, spirit, and courage, amounting at times to audacity, and a feeling of intense severity when excited. His Alimentiveness appears to have been only average in development, which, if not perverted, would have allowed him to live a sober and temperate life. Acquisitiveness not being specially large, he was doubtless generous, liberal, and free in the use of money, caring for it more to expend than to lay up. Secretiveness was large, which imparted tact, power of concealment, and ability to manage, and led to adroitness, and even cunning and duplicity; but Cautiousness not being large, he was liable to be indiscreet and impulsive, and when acting on the spur of the moment, and in a state of excitement, he would be rash and impetuous. He could plot well, but could not execute safely. His acts may have been done in secret, but so done that they would ultimately be exposed.

"His moral brain, was, in some respects, strong, and in others weak. His head, as a whole, was high, but contracted on the top. He had a full development of Benevolence, which gave him sympathy and generosity of feeling; and this benevolence, in the absence of influential Acquisitiveness, would lead him to be decidedly generous hearted in the use of money. He was urbane, kind, and ready to render service. His Veneration was large, which must have had power to check his passions, and lead him to be mindful of superiors, and also serve to give him a respectful and deferential address. His sense of nobility and aristocracy, and consciousness of superior power, was a prominent feature of his mind. Through the influence of Veneration, he could appear devotional, and thus inspire confidence in others, and lead them to trust to his honesty. He had very large Firmness, which gave him unusual determination of mind and disposition to carry out his desires and purposes, and which, connected with his Destructiveness, rendered him unusually efficient and vigorous in resisting opposition from others, and in overcoming obstacles. He had a good degree of Imitation, which, with his Benevolence, enabled him to adapt himself to others, and thus render himself easy and agreeable.

"Spirituality appears to have been very weak, which left his mind without much regard for such features of religion as depend on faith; hence he was skeptical, and a doubter. His Hope appears to have been large, giving enterprise, sanguine, speculative, and venturesome feelings, and a desire to engage in business of a hypothetical, prospective, and promising nature. He was not easily discouraged, but always confident of success. His Conscientiousness was moderate, and not strong enough to have a regulating influence on his mind. This faculty and Cautiousness, both being inferior, left his feelings without balancing-power; hence, while he lacked honesty, he had neither prudence nor circumspection — had not the restraining influence of the sense of danger nor of punishment. His impulses were developed at pleasure, and the various faculties gratified as they clamored for action. Whatever faculty was most excited for the time being, swayed

his mind as a whole; thus, the acts of his life were contradictory, and his character did not harmonize with itself. Had these two faculties of prudence and honesty been more prominent, he would have been able so to regulate his conduct as to have made almost an entire change in his whole life and character.

"The crown of his head was very high, showing large Self-esteem and Approbativeness, indicating pride, dignity, consciousness of self-importance, ambition, desire to please, and to gain distinction and fame. Such a mind, connected with such ambition, could not be contented in private life, nor bear to be repulsed, put down, or superseded by others; for such pride, joined with such sensitiveness, produces a character which is easily wounded. He had a great discernment of character, and power to read the spirit and tone of another person's mind. He was exceedingly winning in his manners, through his politeness, ambition, self-complacency, blandness of manner, respectfulness of demeanor, and ready, available intellect, connected with that personal address and luster of eye which few men possessed.

"He had large Continuity, which gave power to apply the mind to one subject, and to think closely and connectedly; and he was much indebted to this persistency of mind for his success in scholarship, in his profession, and in politics.

"His social brain was unevenly developed, and should have been a peculiar point in his character, and given eccentricity to the affections. He lacked local attachment; was naturally inclined to travel, and loved the variety and excitement which new places and scenes presented. He had not consistent and permanent love, nor was he uniformly interested in children, as such; and though sons would excite his ambition, a beautiful daughter would awaken far more affection. He had but little Adhesiveness; was not a permanent friend, and could not be relied upon in this respect. He may have been ardent and sincere for the time being, but change of scene and society would equally affect his attachments, unless they were fortified by other considerations. His attachments were more

extended and influenced by ambition, than confiding and domestic in their character.

"His Amativeness was very large, and very sharply developed in the head, indicating great intensity, power, and activity. This must have been one of the leading features of his character. The relationship between his mind and woman; the power he exerted over her, and the intense passion he manifested for her, are in strict harmony with his organization. The love-passion was inordinate, which, connected with his other peculiar qualities, must have given him a winning power and captivating influence over woman seldom equaled. With his very high tone of organization, he was not so likely to become vulgar and gross in this feeling so as to yield to the lower forms of its gratification, as would one of a coarser organization with the same development of Amativeness. He would always be the gentleman, and seek associates among the cultivated and refined. With the exception of the excess of this faculty, and that of Destructiveness, and the weakness of Conscientiousness and Cautiousness, his organization was comparatively unexceptionable; and, but for these defects, he might have been one of the most brilliant characters that ever figured in the pages of American history. Seldom do we find so much executiveness, ambition, manliness, strength of purpose, intuition of mind, natural eloquence, polite address, and ability completely to magnetize and captivate others, as his organization indicates."

Thus, the phrenologist.

Add, mentally, to his statement, that Aaron Burr was left an orphan in his infancy; that he was brought up by a well-intentioned, severe, ungenial Puritanic clergyman; that he was reared in a religion which did not engage his affections, nor satisfy his intellect, and which, therefore, did less than nothing for his moral nature; that he was educated in the Voltairian, Chesterfieldian period, so quickening to the intellect, so lulling to the conscience; and that his early military career kept in the most vigorous exercise, for four or five years, all the strong executive points of his character, and left in comparative inaction those prudential and higher moral qual-

ities which most needed strengthening. Consider, too, how the circumstances of his life seemed to compel him to be always *giving*, so that, at last, he appeared to have quite lost the power of discriminating between the luxury of generosity and the duty of honesty. And then, think, how bitterly and long he expiated his errors, and how loftily he bore his misfortunes, and how superior he ever was to the weakness of self-vindication, and how many worse men than he have been borne triumphantly along to the close of their lives, and followed to the grave by the acclamations of a nation.

To judge this man, to decide how far he was unfortunate, and how far guilty; how much we ought to pity, and how much to blame him — is a task beyond my powers. And what occasion is there for judging him, or for judging any one? We all know that his life was an unhappy failure. He failed to gain the small honors at which he aimed; he failed to live a life worthy of his opportunities; he failed to achieve a character worthy of his powers. It was a great, great pity. And any one is to be pitied who, in thinking of it, has any other feelings than those of compassion — compassion for the man whose life was so much less a blessing to him than it might have been, and compassion for the country, which after producing so rare and excellent a kind of man, lost a great part of the good he might have done her.

The great error of his career, as before remarked, was his turning politician. He was too good for a politician, and not great enough for a statesman. If he had been brought up wisely, and then subjected to a hard early experience of poverty and toil, he might have acquired that moral quality which, in connection with his keen, ready intellect, and his tremendous propelling power, would have made him the greatest teacher of the young, that, perhaps, ever existed. Nature meant him for that. In the present condition of the schoolmaster's craft, degraded and paralyzed as it is by its connexion with the State, drawing its support from the people in the odious form of a tax, reducing a teacher to the level of a common office-holder, and making him the hireling of ignorant, or narrow, or dissolute trustees — it seems ridiculous to say of

any man that he might have been a great and brilliant instructor of youth! Yet that was precisely the vocation of all others that Aaron Burr would have excelled in, and would have chosen, if he had been as GOOD, as he was acute, kind, and energetic. He would have founded a school that would have done as much for the enlightenment of Man as Princeton has done for the advancement of a Sect.

As it was, he did the State some service, though they know it not. By being the first to turn to practical account the inherent weakness of our Constitution, by teaching the Democratic Party how to carry elections, by the invention of Filibustering, by giving the country and General Jackson a taste for south-western acquisition, thus marshaling events the way that they would go, he, at least, *accelerated* the history of his country. In the wrong direction, you will say; true, but it was the direction in which the country was destined to go, and go as far as the road led.

His duel with Hamilton had the effect, finally, of rendering the practice of dueling entirely odious in the northern States. That was a benefit. In suffering the consequences of that affair, he simply expiated the sins of his generation, and the expiation fell, not unjustly, upon him. *He* ought to have known better, and, knowing better, he had the fortitude to bear the scoffs of cowards. He was, upon the whole, I am inclined to think, a better man than Hamilton; and it was well ordered, that by being the survivor, he should have had the *worst* of the encounter.

It is to be said in praise of Burr, that in the various offices held by him, he acquitted himself well. He was an indefatigable and useful Senator; a Vice-President of ideal excellence. If he had been elevated a step higher, his Washingtonian habit of taking the best advice before finally deciding upon an important measure, would have prevented his making serious mistakes. He would have been a good President. Instead of plundering the treasury of his country, as Hamilton predicted, he would have been more likely to spend twice his income in supporting the "dignity" of the office, and to have passed from the White House to the court of bankruptcy.

If his expedition had succeeded, it was in him, I think, to have run a career in Spanish America similar to that of Napoleon in Europe. Like Napoleon, he would have been one of the most amiable of despots, and one of the most destructive. Like Napoleon, he would have been sure, at last, to have been overwhelmed in a prodigious ruin. Like Napoleon, he would have been idolized and execrated. Like Napoleon, he would have had his half dozen friends to go with him to his St. Helena. Like Napoleon, he would have justified to the last, with the utmost sincerity, nearly every action of his life.

We live in a better day than he did. Nearly every thing is better now in the United States than it was fifty years ago, and a much larger proportion of the people possess the means of enjoying and improving life. If some evils are more obvious and rampant than they were, they are also better known, and the remedy is nearer. Every one begins to see, with more or less clearness, that the public business can never be well done until it is done upon the principles which make private business safe and profitable. The spectacle of an intelligent community throwing itself, every few months, into a violent, expensive, and demoralizing agitation of the question Who shall keep the public books? is felt to be irrational and ridiculous. By degrees, the truth becomes apparent that the thing to be done is to take all the offices out of politics, and to introduce into all branches of the public service the principles of permanence and promotion for merit alone, upon which the people conduct their own affairs, and without which no private establishment could exist.

Politics, apart from the pursuit of office, have again become real and interesting. The issue is distinct and important enough to justify the intense concern of a nation. To a young man coming upon the stage of life with the opportunities of Aaron Burr, a glorious and genuine political career is possible. The dainty keeping aloof from the discussion of public affairs, which has been the fashion until lately, will not again find favor with any but the very stupid, for a long time to come. The intellect of the United States, once roused to the consider-

ation of political questions, will doubtless be found competent to the work demanded of it.

The career of Aaron Burr can never be repeated in the United States. That of itself is a proof of progress. The game of politics which he played is left, in these better days, to far inferior men, and the moral license which he and Hamilton permitted themselves is not known in the circles they frequented. But the graver errors, the radical vices, of both men belong to human nature, and will always exist to be shunned and battled.

THE END.